The Pulpit

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A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

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JUNE, 1953

By John R. Scotford

THE POWER OF THI

PREACHING goes back to the prophets of righteousness who arose during the 8th century B.C. Despite the multitudinous changes which the ages have brought, it still flourishes. It has outlasted much, and gives excellent promise of future survival. Why has the sermon been able to meet the test of time?

When only few men could read, word of mouth was the only means available for mass communication. If the prophets were to proclaim the laws of righteousness, if the early Christians were to make known the story of their risen Lord, there was just one way to do it—to *talk* about it. When more than a handful of listeners were to be reached at one time, an ordered presentation became desirable. The result was preaching and the sermon. This might be reinforced by the use of some symbols and even by pantomime, but the essential truth was promulgated by the spoken word.

Early Preaching

From the days of Christ to the invention of printing the Christian gospel was spread primarily by preaching. What the people really knew, they learned through their ears. Then came the printing press, and in its wake the Protestant Reformation. Though an increasing number could read the Christian story, preaching achieved new popularity. Even those who could read the Bible craved an interpretation of its meaning. The more Christian people knew, the more they wanted to know. Preaching shifted its emphasis from the telling of a story to the expounding of the Scriptures.

During the early settlement of this country and the westward-movement of its frontier, the intellectual and emotional poverty of the people heightened the prestige of the preacher. He was presumed to be a man of education who commonly knew more than his listeners. In a day when most men were timid and hesitant in speech, he spoke with assurance. Many who could not fully comprehend what he said felt that somehow he did them good. Protestants have often derived a sacramental value from listening to incomprehensi sermons not unlike the grace which the Catho experiences from the mass. It was not what t preacher said which registered so much as his p sonality, the resonance of his voice and t melodious flow of his words. This was true of so of the renowned preachers of the immediate pa They could say "Fee-fi-fo-fum" for twenty minu in such an impressive way that many of th listeners would go away declaring, "It's too de for me, but isn't it wonderful?"

Facing New Conditions

As education has increased, and as more peo have been enabled to get ideas from the print page, the pre-eminence of the pulpit as a chann for intellectual nourishment has declined. Oft there have been men in the pews who knew mo than the man in the pulpit. As the arts of pub speech came to be more widely practiced, t public no longer held in awe anyone who cou stand up and talk. The pulpit lost its form monopoly and became just one of many means communication.

Naturally the preachers desired to retain the congregations. This they sought to do in two way One was to magnify the *emotional* element whi has always been present in effective preachin People enjoy having their feelings agitate Evangelistic meetings became a means to this en particularly in the south. Although their ostensib purpose was to win converts, such meetings we attended chiefly by church people in quest of e citement. Some of this fervor carried over into t regular services. It has long been an accepted pri ciple of popular homiletics that sound is an effe tive substitute for sense. If a preacher can ma enough noise in enough ways he does not ne to say anything. I have heard sermons which we really rhythmical incantations aimed at the em tions of the congregation.

The Sermon Is Purged

A second and closely related procedure for fi ing the pews was the *popularization* of preachin making it a form of entertainment. Effecti illustrations were much sought after and oft constituted the substance of the sermon. Topics the day were discussed. Tricks were copied fro the lecture platform and even the stage. Some da ing spirits went in for theatrical effects. The pulp endeavored to become a Sunday morning Cha tauqua program. The preacher dramatized h personality for all it was worth—and then som Both the emotionalization and the popularizatio

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Effective Preaching Can Hold Its Own
In an Age of Mass Communications

SERMON SURVIVES!

of the sermon worked for a time, but neither was permanently effective.

Meanwhile events took a curious turn. The pulpit, faced by increased competition and a growing sophistication on the part of the people, was placed under the acid test of the newer psychology. Yet the sermon has survived, and promises to attain a new vogue. In the process it has been thoroughly purged.

During the past fifty years the minds of the people have been subjected to an increasingly furious assault. First came the speeding up of the printing press and the flood of mass-circulation periodicals. No longer was it necessary to go to church to get ideas. Then came the movies with their emotional appeal. Their rise was coincident with the eclipse of the professional evangelist. No wonder he denounced them; they stole his audience! Next came the radio. Instead of going to church to hear music or to listen to a great voice, one needed only to spin the dial. The separation of the voice from the living presence has been hard on speakers and preachers who exercised their personalities more than their intellects and who talked without saying much. And now we have television, which reunites voice and speaker. What this will do to the church remains to be seen. We suspect that it will lead to more active forms of worship in which just sitting in the pews will give way to a larger degree of congregational participation.

Toward Greater Reality

Meanwhile the psychological understanding of churchgoers has been increasing. The teachings of Sigmund Freud have been like a pebble tossed into an undisturbed pool of water. The immediate cause of the disturbance may have disappeared, but the ripples go on and on, indirectly influencing popular attitudes in many ways. The words which people utter are no longer readily accepted at their face value; almost instinctively we seek to probe their motivation. Pretense is readily detected. Mere fluency has lost its power. Words no longer enchant us. We judge one another more carefully, making sincerity the prime test. Much which once passed for piety is now laughed at.

These changes have put the church out of the show business both on weekdays and Sundays. They are purging it of pretense. They are driving it toward a greater reality. With the minor appeals of the past largely eliminated, the emphasis is increasingly a genuinely religious one. The role of preaching is quite different from that of the past.

Recent years have also seen a transformation in much Protestant worship. While the minister once talked almost continuously throughout the service, now the people and the choir have a larger participation. Once the preacher was expected to create by his words a religious atmosphere; now this is achieved through the use of architecture, music and liturgy. The minister utters fewer words and is less conspicuous; he shoulders less of the burden of the service.

Increased Attendance

Along with these changes has come an increase in church attendance. Congregations began to gain about 1936. The war supplied people with many excuses for absenting themselves from church, but the number of worshipers either held its own or increased during the war years. Today many Protestant churches are crowded. Two services on Sunday morning are becoming commonplace, and quite a number of churches now hold three. More people are listening to sermons than at any time during the last half century, in spite of the extinction of the great preachers of the Brooks, Beecher, Gunsaulus, Cadman succession. Fosdick was the last American preacher whose name was known to the masses, and he is now heard only rarely. We have run out of pulpit princes, yet the average of preaching is better than ever and has increasing acceptance.

People undoubtedly are becoming more interested in religion than they have been for many years. Our Protestant churches are unmistakably on the upgrade. In addition, two other circumstances are magnifying the position of the preacher.

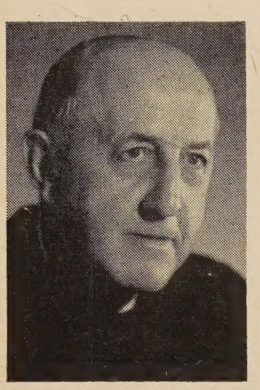
Hand-Tailored Truth

In a day of impersonal communication, the preacher is a living presence. Except on television, the words and ideas which play upon us are disconnected with the personality that is responsible for them. To use the vernacular, they are "canned." The preacher is a creature of flesh and blood. We not only see him, we hear him, and in a sense we feel him. No man can stand in the pulpit and speak without revealing more of himself than is conveyed by his words. The whole man is there; he is a "living sacrifice."

Contrasted with today's mass media, which addresses the public in units counted in millions, the sermon is a welcome bit of hand-tailored truth. At its best it is born of a particular moment of time, at a particular place, and is aimed at a particular group of people. Its power is in direct

proportion to its adaptation to a specific situation. It should spring from the intimate relationship between a minister and his congregation. It is not a standard part as good one place as another. It is not a work of art to be exhibited before a succession of congregations. It is not even something to be admired for its own sake. It is truth relevant to a precise moment in the lives of a particular company of people. In a sense such preaching is utterly ephemeral. There is nothing deader than most old sermons. In another sense it is eternal. It is a glimpse of the everlasting in the midst of change.

So long as men lead impersonal lives and receive their intellectual provender in standardized packages there will be a place for the preacher who can speak out of the depths of his own experience to the needs of specific men and women. Modern conditions are giving the sermon a new distinctiveness and a new power.



A Sermon for June Graduates

The Honor of a Certain Aim

By Ray Freeman Jenney

A STORY from the life of Francis I, the king of France in the first part of the 16th century, aptly illustrates the theme of this sermon. It is the story of the battle of Pavia which Francis lost on the 24th of February, 1525. In this battle his army was sorely defeated, and he himself was captured and taken to Madrid, Spain, the capital city of his rival, Emperor Charles V. It was while he was lying in the custody of his enemy that Francis sent to Paris the dispatch which has made his name immortal. After explaining his defeat, King Francis added, with truly royal dignity: "All has been lost save honor."

Honor—a sense of honor—once characterized every man of dignity, reputation and worth. It must do so today, for without it no man can long stand or any civilization hope to survive. Honor is one of the great marks of a Christian. It has ever been the requirement of men who desire to belong to "the fellowship of the concerned." Honor is the agreement we, at our best, make with ourselves, with others and with God—in order that we may keep life's high commitment, and live with dignity and worth.

An example of honor is clearly illustrated by the intrepid explorers who in the 15th and 16th centuries sought for the Northwest Passage. They believed that the land which Columbus had discovered was a narrow strip, through which there was a passage to the Indies—a land rich in silks, spices and condiments, which were the dire needs of those who lived in that barren age.

A Story of the Sea

Among the early explorers of these centuries of adventure were Drake, Ponce de Leon and Hudson. Of the latter, Henry Van Dyke wrote some noble lines in his poem, "Hudson's Last Voyage," which are worth pondering over. Hear Hudson speak:

> Yes, I seek it still
> My great adventure and my guiding star!*

Briefly told, it is the story of Hudson cast adrift from his main ship, the *Discoverie*, on June 24, 1611, by members of the crew who had mutinied. Hudson, with his young son, John, two of his officers, John King and Phillip Staffe, and a few of his crew, were placed in a little boat and left to their fate in the great bay which afterward was to bear his name.

The poem begins with the sight of the sail of his ship disappearing in the distance. Without food or ammunition, Hudson is left to die with his battered and loyal companions. At first, he vigorously protests his fate and the ingratitude of those who mutinied; he even raves against God who would allow such a thing to come to pass. Then, in a more thoughtful mood, he recalls that five years ago, on an April morn in a little church in England, he, his son John and the members of his crew had taken the sacrament of the Lord's Supper before their first voyage in the ship *Hopewell*. It was in that church that they had vowed, with God's help,

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*From "Hudson's Last Voyage," by Henry Van Dyke. Copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission.

to search the seas until they found the water-path, the Northwest Passage, which would lead to the Land of Spice. Van Dyke has Hudson say:

> I believe
> That God has poured the ocean round His world
> Not to divide but to unite the lands.
> . . .
> As men who served His purpose, I would claim
> a place among the knighthood of the Sea.
> . . .
> And I have earned it, though my quest should fail,
> For, mark me well, *the honor of our life*
> Derives from this; to have a certain aim
> Before us always, which our will must seek
> Amid the peril of uncertain ways.

Then, in a reminiscent vein, he describes that slow and perilous voyage they took in the *Hopewell,* among the ice packs along the Greenland coast and down the rugged shore of Newfoundland.

> Like one who feels his way
> With outstretched hand across a darkened room—

Thus they searched among the inlets to find the Northwest Passage. But they found it not, and were compelled to return to England.

The poet in a further reminiscent mood enables Hudson to recall to his son, John, and the others the voyage they made only two years before in the *Half-Moon.* After many days' sailing, they passed through a channel into a goodly bay—now New York harbor. There they found the island now called Manhattan and sailed "nor'west by north" up a mighty river by the naked rocks now called the Palisades.

A Man of Honor

Facing his predicament, as a man of honor, Hudson voices those brave words which have timeless and abiding meaning:

> Yes, I seek it still,
> For my great adventure and my guiding star!
> For look ye, friends, our voyage is not done;
> We hold by hope as long as life endures!
> So point her up, John King, nor'west by north
> We'll keep *the honor of a certain aim*
> Amid the peril of uncertain ways,
> And sail ahead, and leave the rest to God.

We are living in a truly troubled time, in a world of mutiny. Deserted, we are adrift in boats that are very small, upon a mighty storm-tossed ocean, with our haven far, far away. What shall we do in these dread times that try men's souls? The answer is clear. We, too, must valiantly seek the Northwest Passage; seek for some way which leads to the true meaning of life—"the honor of a certain aim"—and the purpose of God. This is the Christian's way of acting, Jesus confirmed it; "Seek and you will find," he said, for: "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

How shall we seek the Northwest Passage that we, too, "may keep the honor of a certain aim amid the perils of uncertain ways"? That is the central question which we, as Christians, face and must answer.

Three ruling principles guide us in our quest.

First of all, honor demands that we continually seek for the best. In Jesus' parable of the pearl of great price, the central message is that the price of the best is all we have. Lynn Harold Hough has ably stated this principle in a paradoxical way. "We give," said he, "our first-class loyalty to second-class things," or, "We give our second-class loyalty to first-class things." The Christian gospel requires that "We give our first-class loyalty to first-class things." If we fail to do so, then our religion becomes secondary and unimportant. If we Christians were only different, then perhaps those who are not Christians would not be so indifferent. The Christian faith calls for our complete allegiance and witness.

Reverence for Life

I had the privilege of personally meeting Albert Schweitzer, the great teacher, philosopher, musician and medical missionary, when he was in Chicago on his way to speak at the Goethe Centennial in Aspen, Colorado. Guests in the home of a University of Chicago professor were given the opportunity to question this noble Christian. Someone asked: "If you had your life to live over again, would you go to Africa as a medical missionary?" He pondered over it for a time and said: "Yes, indeed I would, but I am confident that I would place more emphasis on answering the question as to the meaning of life in this secular age and how one can have a reverence for life and seek with honor the best." There is our answer! Seeking for the best, living with honor, giving of our highest loyalty to the best in order that life may have dignity, worth and honor. These epitomize the secret of his life. Dr. Schweitzer is aware that we must not be contented with things, that goods without God inevitably lead to ruin.

Another ruling principle is that we must learn to cooperate with the inevitable. Reinhold Niebuhr has been credited with a prayer of penetrating insight: "O God, help us to have the skill and courage to change what ought to be changed, and the patience to accept what cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference between the two."

Accept the Inevitable

That is it! You and I can live victoriously if we do our best to change our lot before we accept what we cannot change. Many a battle which seems to be going against us can still be won if we are brave and resourceful five minutes longer. We were not made to surrender, to asquiesce, to accept what is, in blind and defeated resignation, saying, "What's the use? You can't do anything about it!" There is too much of that kind of talk today and, as a consequence, we are confused, frustrated and defeated.

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To come face to face with some inevitable situation often brings bitterness and rebellion. That way means defeat! The story of one of the great presidents of Harvard College, Charles William Elliot, is worth recalling. Born with a serious facial disfigurement, he discovered as a young man that nothing could be done about it, and he must go through life with this mark. It is related that when his mother brought to him that tragic truth, it was indeed "the dark hour of his soul." His mother told him, "My son, it is not possible for you to get rid of this handicap. We have consulted the best surgeons and they say that nothing can be done. But it is possible for you, with God's help, to grow a mind and soul so big that people will forget to look at your face." And he did just that! God will help us to "do the best we can with what we have, wherever we are." Having done our best and more, with God's help, we can then accept the inevitable and keep our honor bright.

Finally, if we would live lives of sacred honor, we must not only do our best and learn to cooperate with the inevitable, but we must make an intelligent commitment of our lives to God. The truth is that the vast majority of Christians have become so absorbed in the secular present that we have closed ourselves off from the dimensions of eternity. For example, in our attitude toward war, we forget the truth of Pascal's great utterance: "Because we would not fortify justice, now we justify force." We are trying to save the world from war and extinction by our one-dimensional living. When our horizons are bounded by the present, and things, we live one-dimensional, earthbound lives. Then we shape our deeds by secular desire rather than by the abiding moral and spiritual principles of God. We end up in the flatlands of mere existence or extinction if we attempt to do this. We continue to slay our enemies rather than our enmities. We are more concerned that we have our pockets full of dollars than that we have a world full of brothers. We legislate, investigate and fight for power, as if the final power was ours; and no wonder that so often our lives end in confusion, defeat and death.

This need not be our lot! This need not be our fate! You and I do not need to walk alone. God is available! With Isaiah we can know that God travels with us on every highway of life:

> On it the redeemed shall walk
> Those whom the eternal hath set free.

It is the specialty of the Christian religion to set man free, and to enable him to have those resources in himself which enable him to live life well and to honor God.

A woman teacher in the Southern mountains when asked the secret of her useful and triumphant life, replied: "I work as if everything depended on me; I pray as if everything depended on God."

The world desperately needs such men and women of Christian honor—those who "think like men of action and act like men of thought" and wait on God to put his strength against their weakness that they may be strong and able to

> . . . keep the honor of a certain aim
> Amid the peril of uncertain ways

supported by the confident faith that "our sufficiency is of God."

GOD SPEAKING TO US

A Children's Sermon by Ralph Conover Lankler

HAVE you ever heard a mailbox talking? A weekly magazine printed a picture of a mailbox that spoke to people.

When people approached the mailbox to deposit a package, a voice would ask, "Have you wrapped that package securely?" The voice would also give suggestions to passersby, lecturing those who started across the street against the light.

The mailbox was not really speaking. The voice that came from it was that of an employee of the post office. He was located in a near-by building where he could watch people from a window. He had placed a loud-speaker in the mailbox. Then by the use of a public address system, he could speak into a microphone and have the sound of his voice come from the box. It seemed so real that little children thought that a skeegie-weegie dwarf was inside the box among the letters.

There are many things in life that seem to talk to us. For instance, all of us have radios in our homes. With a turn of a switch we may hear a man talking from New York, Chicago, San Francisco or even from the other side of the world. The radio seems to be talking but it is a person in some other place that is doing the speaking.

The Bible speaks to us in a similar manner. It says, "Let the children come unto me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." When we hear these words read from the Bible, who is speaking to us? Is it the person who is reading? Yes, it is a person speaking, but Jesus also is speaking.

When we read or hear the words of Jesus in the Bible it is God who is really speaking to us, because Jesus said: "The words that I say to you I do not speak of my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works."

The mailbox spoke to the people on the street corner; our radios speak to us in our homes; the Bible speaks to us when we hear it or read it. But let us never forget that behind all of life God is speaking to us.

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By A. Fay Hill

The 1953 Seminarian Sermon of the Year

The Treasures of Wisdom

That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:2, 3.

THE treasures of wisdom! How good those words sound to us Christians. Seldom have people been more perplexed and bewildered by history than we are today. We long for a wisdom to make sense out of the constantly changing, flickering pattern of life, a wisdom that can tell us what to expect of life, and what is the meaning of it all. But that wisdom is hidden from our eyes, and we still stand in confusion before the stage of life.

We are like the Colossians to whom Paul wrote. It was not so much their lack of courage or love or constructiveness that bothered Paul as it was their lack of a firm structure of faith. They were considering a new, embellished doctrine offered to them by some suave pagan teachers who said that the simple Christian faith of the Colossians was inadequate, old-fashioned and naive. Those pagans painted a colorful, enticing picture of their doctrine, and the Colossians were impressed and tempted. It was to win the people back to their Christian faith that Paul wrote. For he realized what we have forgotten: that faith is the foundation of all Christian virtues. But not just any faith will do. The foundation of faith must be sound or the entire house of Christian character will eventually collapse.

Without a pure, firm faith in Christ, the hearts that are knit together in love are apt to separate in dissension. We have tended to take too happy a view of love—as if it were the simplest matter in the world to love one's neighbor. But today, in a world that has been horribly mauled by colossal wars of hate, we have come to see just how hard it is to love. It becomes progressively more apparent how grimly difficult it is to maintain an attitude of loving affection when we live in a brutal society which demands that we compete with each other or starve, and which demands that periodically we take up arms against each other. Those stately, majestic words of Jesus, "You shall love the Lord your God . . . and your neighbor as yourself," send a thrill through our souls; but when we get on a crowded subway after an exasperating day at work the thrill is replaced with old annoyances.

Man Must Have a Goal

Love always means sacrifice, the giving of oneself cheerfully, and that is hard. The other day as I sat in a barber shop an elderly couple came in. The man was deathly pale, clutching at his heart, and the breath rattled in his throat. His wife helped him to a chair, and then with surprising venom said, "See! I told you you shouldn't work so hard with your heart the way it is!" And he summoned up all the strength left in his frail frame to hiss back, "Now don't start that again. I'm sick of your nagging." That couple had probably been married for forty or fifty years and reared a family together. But after all that time, their love for each other, not to speak of the love for the rest of humanity, had not grown enough to keep them from arguing spitefully in what could easily have been their last moments together. Love is not easy. If we are to have any sort of love at all, it must be grounded in and come from faith. Faith is the electrical connection with the source of all goodness; if the connection is broken, the love dies out like an old light bulb.

Unless that faith is firm in its structure, it is tragically easy to lose the patience and endurance that are necessary to meet life heroically. Life seldom gives us a chance to meet the evil in some gigantic and climactic battle. Most of our lives are spent in an exasperating and exhausting running fight with evil, a fight that is never conclusive, never finally victorious. That is why many war veterans found civilian life so crushing. There is a much decorated hero who actually left his wife and children and became a hobo, because he was so overwhelmed with the little nagging, frustrating details of civilian life. He was never quite able to bring his great store of courage to bear on the bewildering complexity of everyday problems. He could handle evil in a big battle, but he lacked the patient endurance that is life's prime requisite.

It is hard to stick it out in the long, ceaseless struggle with evil and to give a good account of

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A. FAY HILL is the 1953 selection for the Seminarian Preacher of the Year, a project sponsored jointly by The Pulpit and the Chicago Sunday Evening Club as a means of promoting more effective preaching in the nation's seminaries. Mr. Hill graduated from Union Theological Seminary, New York, last month and is being ordained as a Presbyterian minister. A native of Arkansas, he received his earlier educational training in California, graduated from De Pauw University in 1950, and served with the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Belgium and Germany during World War II. His sermon was delivered before the Sunday Evening Club on May 3. The judges' decisions on the other top seminarian selections appear on page 17.

ourselves. But it is infinitely harder if we have no strong faith to console and encourage us. That is why modern governments spend so much time and money making sure that a soldier on the battlefield knows what he is fighting for. If a man is to have the stubborn patience to suffer for long periods, as soldiers so often must, he must have a reason for his misery. No man can labor for long on a road that goes nowhere. Man must have a goal, a faith that gives meaning to his world.

But if we need faith in order to have love and patient courage, we need it even more if we are to be creative, to do anything to better this world. Creativity, like love, is precarious and rare enough as it is; if we disconnect it from its source by weakening faith, we destroy that creativity.

A friend of mine on the west coast is a writer. He has as yet failed to publish anything significant and must work for his living elsewhere while he writes. But he has now ceased writing. He told me a few years ago that, until he could find some meaning in life, he had nothing to write about. Life has become for him a dreary, eternal, meaningless cycle of those banal elements of life: eat, work, sleep, play. If we are to expend the great effort of creativity we need a sturdy, wise faith.

A Realistic Faith

There's the rub! A *wise* faith! Not just any faith will do. If we are to be made wise by our faith in Christ, then it must be grounded in reality. That faith must give the best possible attitude that one can take toward life. We need a faith that will make the most sense out of this swirling life, that will help us to see beyond the externals into the basic pattern of life. It is not enough simply to believe in "something" with all our hearts! We must have the *right* faith—one that is true to the facts—for there is no despair quite so deep as that of the unrealistic optimist when he is proven to be wrong.

We need a faith, but it must be a realistic one. Yet does it not seem a bit odd to talk about being more realistic and still sit in a Christian church? If we are to be realistic, shouldn't we drop our highly idealistic Christian faith? We can see where the wisdom of Jesus led him—straight to the cross! He may have died courageously, but he did die. He was helpless in the grasp of the powerful Roman empire. And anyone who follows him today appears equally helpless in the grasp of the evil forces of our day. Christianity seems so inadequate to deal with the brute facts of life! We are up against real, demonic powers. How can all the ideals in the world stop them? Atomic power, flame-throwing tanks, jet airplanes and millions of deluded peoples thirsting for our blood. How can faith in Christ halt that dread array of power? Certainly faith in him gives no *obvious* answer to the question!

But Paul spoke of the wisdom that is *hidden* in Christ. By that he meant that it is not obvious; only the man of faith can appreciate the wisdom that comes with faith. Paul had that faith, and he knew that it is Christ who is the real victor, the final power in the world. The world and all its blustering power only *appears* to be the winner. How does our atomic power help us when the end of life has come and we set out into the darkness? How can electricity be of help to a man when his wife is divorcing him? How large an army does it take to assuage a man's grief over the loss of his only son?

Hidden Wisdom

It is exactly at these points, where all the power of man is useless, that Christ's power begins. It is with the ultimate, basic, internal realities of life that Jesus deals. He knows where all the power of man leads him without the restraining hand of unselfish love. He knows how the spirit of man will be destroyed by the cruelties of the world and his own selfishness if he is left alone. So it is with these instead of the tinselly externals that Jesus deals.

Christ does not stop the fearful power of the armies, it is true. He allowed himself to be crucified, but he does continue to work with awful patience on the souls of the men in those armies. He is with us today in spite of the crucifixion, comforting the bereaved, calming the anxious, encouraging the cynical, calling forth love in the hearts of men—love that shall someday cause all the wars to cease. His power is hidden, but to the eyes of faith it is revealed. In him at long last we see the true pattern of life. We have the wisdom we seek. For the secret wisdom is to know that *he* is the real power, the Lord of Creation, in spite of all the powers of men.

Life Has Meaning

As we affirm our faith in Christ and constantly beg God to increase it, let us look at the treasures of great wisdom which we discover! If we will believe that he is the Lord of life, who has overcome the evil of the world and destroyed the power of sin, then the urge to be creative, to make this world more in accord with God's will—in so far as we are able—will catch fire in our souls again. For faith is the assurance that we are not chaff in the relentless winds of time, but are really children of God, loved by him in spite of all our past sins. We have been given a task to do, talents to invest, a part to play in the great drama of human history. *Life has meaning.* It may be harsh, but it does have meaning.

I have a Negro friend who went to medical school in the south after being reared in the north. He quit in the middle of the year and returned home a thoroughly disillusioned young man. After that he became more and more cynical and discouraged until finally he even left the Church, gave up all thoughts of a medical education and took a laboring job. It was not until sometime later that he met a minister who was able to introduce him to a stronger Christian faith. He came to see that Christianity offers no quick, easy solution as he had thought. But he learned that it does offer hope, an ultimate promise of the triumph of the right. He learned again to be-

lieve in life, and he once more enrolled in school. He is a wiser man today. He has no vague hopes of a quick utopia, but he does have faith that his efforts are not in vain. Faith in Christ does give wisdom, and one of the treasures of that wisdom is a realistic, creative spirit.

Another great treasure given us by our faith in Christ is a stubborn stick-to-itiveness. We expect a long and hard fight. There is no cause to panic in the face of a local defeat. The Kingdom of God is coming, thanks to the Lord who turned the tide of the battle with his sacrifice. Our part in the struggle is to hold on till he comes, persevering in our efforts to serve him even when this outwardly appears futile. Faith gives us an eternal perspective.

But not only does faith in Christ give us the wisdom that itself gives birth to creativity and endurance, but it also fans to life the love that has almost gone out. When the full significance of the fact that God gave his only son on the cross, so that we might not be doomed to meaningless lives, becomes known to the innermost depths of our hearts, then much of that old soot of guilt and fear that clogs our minds and makes petty persons of us can be blown away, and love can burn more brightly. Then the joy at the promise of being forgiven and accepted by God spills over into our daily lives in the form of love.

God Is with Us

When my brother and I were small children, we were often so naughty that my poor mother was driven to distraction. One day, after a particularly hectic time, she said, as she put us to bed for our naps, "Sometimes you boys are so naughty that I just feel like going away and never coming back!" Her remark was innocent enough, but as children so often do, we thought she meant it and were deeply troubled. So later in the afternoon when we awoke, we had the eerie, sick feeling that something was wrong. We leapt out of bed and ran into the kitchen shouting for Mother. She wasn't there. In panic we flew from one room to another. Mother wasn't in the house. We tried to go outside, but the big, stiff doorknobs were insuperable obstacles for our small hands. So two little boys stood on tiptoe with their snub noses pressed against the window and wailed in despair.

It seemed like hours before we saw Mother come out of the neighbor's house and walk across the lawn. As she opened the door two sobbing children flung themselves at her skirts and cried in relief, "O Mama, Mama, we thought you were gone!" And for a significant length of time after that we were exceptionally obedient and adoring children! We were so relieved that she had not deserted us for our naughtiness, that we were delighted to be the type of children we always should have been. Our joy at her forgiveness spilled over in glad obedience.

In faith we are all a bit like that, for we fully deserve to have had God just walk off and leave us alone in this big, empty universe to destroy ourselves. But he didn't. Instead he has come down to us, forgiving us of all our sins. And our faith in that forgiveness releases in our souls the love that answers his love.

We do not need to stand in frustrated confusion before the great problems that face us today. The treasures of wisdom that have been hidden in Christ can be ours if we will believe in Christ, trusting that he is the Lord of life, the Ruler of the universe. And the greatest of all the treasures of wisdom is the knowledge of that boundless love of God's that reaches out for us and claims our hearts.

God of Nature

Tune: *Ellesdie*

GOD of nature, God of beauty,
God who made the world so fair,
God of mountains, God of prairies,
God of grainfields everywhere,
God of rivers, God of forests,
God of clear blue lakes and flowers,
God of every living creature,
Keep us through the years and hours.

God of rural lands and cities,
God of churches, homes, and schools,
God of highways and of byways,
God of nations where right rules,
God of mines and shops and fact'ries,
God of rain and hail and snow,
God of singing birds and children,
Lead us all as we should go.

CHAUNCEY R. PIETY.

Prayer for Couples' Sunday

By Donald O. Press

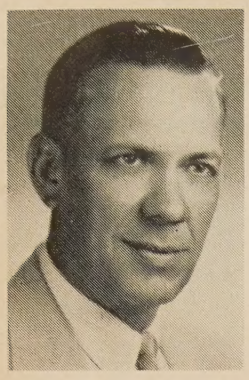
Pastor, First Congregational Church
Oskaloosa, Iowa

HOW wonderful, O Lord God, is thy creation. We gather with glad hearts to thank thee for the life of vibrancy and vitality.

Today the couples of this congregation come honoring thee. As we recall those sacred moments when we stood before thy sacred altar, or in the hallowed room where our marriages were blessed, we are glad that thou has set the solitary in families, and richly blessed us.

Help us to capture a renewed warmth and esteem toward each other. Help us not to take the commonplace for granted, but to hold our relationships holy as a sacred trust.

May our experiences in the family circle lead us to appreciate the larger family of mankind. Forgive us for our thoughtlessness and heedlessness. Keep our lives linked together with love and devotion to each other, that we may dwell in unity and peace, through Jesus Christ, in whose name we took our vows and whose presence makes our homes worthy to be called Christian. Amen.



That 'Old-Time Religion'

By Aaron N. Meckel

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. Hebrews 13:8.

A THING is not good just because it is old, or because it has the stamp of the new on it. No! A thing is good providing it exhibits a perennial vitality, possesses enduring values which defy time and place, is germane to actual need. So it is with religion. I am not interested in a revival of obscurantism. Let us be clear as to our criterion.

"In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time." You have it *there* in those two lines from a great old hymn. Someone has said that the 20th century would spend a lot of its time picking out of the wastebasket what the 19th century has thrown into it!

Speaking of the perennial vitalities reminds us that those first Christians, living in a chaotic, careening world—as crazy as ours—had an anchor. They had a place where they could stand securely. In the 13th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, one of them wrote down something about the anchor. In the 8th verse we read the words of our text. Those first Christians said, "This timeless Christ is our criterion of worth. In him are both the old and the new. We cannot pin any date on him; he defies time."

Meeting Human Need

Suppose we lift a few facets out of that old-time religion at its best. Again, we want no revival of obscurantism, but what is *inwardly and timelessly vital. That* we need to lay hold on!

First of all, that old-time religion at its best had the faculty of *going directly to the heart of human need.* It was an apt diagnostician. Long before the advent of our so-called depth psychology, it laid its hand on the human heart and said, "Thou ailest here, and here and here." It insisted that the first business of religion is redemption. In fact, our religious forebears were so confident of this point that they wrote it into that greatest of all Christian creeds, the Apostles': "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

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John Wesley, founder of Methodism, tries to tell us what happened to him at that old-fashioned church service at Aldersgate, where he had entered with hungry heart. Here was this Oxford don, this man of brilliant cultural achievements, still wanting what Christ alone could give. Wesley speaks of "the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ." In these stormy, wayward times we are rescuing *that* from the wastebasket.

E. Stanley Jones speaks of a young acquaintance of his, Dr. Norell. A brilliant psychiatrist, she had received degrees in both Europe and America. She was fitted for her work, culturally speaking, in a most eminent way. Only one thing did she lack—a transforming spiritual experience. One evening at one of the ashrams she found that experience as she quite simply made a surrender of herself to Christ. When she returned to her pagan associates in psychiatry, they asked her, "What in the world has happened to you? Are you in love?" Little did they know that she had fallen in love with the great Lover of souls. She told them what had happened to her, what she had found. She suggested that they "diagnose" her, which they proceeded to do most thoroughly; whereupon they said to her, "We cannot find any martyr complex in you." Indeed not! For the thing that young woman psychiatrist found is enduringly real. The Greatest Physician of all had laid his hand on her heart and said, "Thou ailest here, and here and here. I am come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly." That old-time religion cleaved through to the inner heart of need. It dealt not primarily with symptoms, but with basic causes.

Contagious Joy

Here is another facet of that old-time religion at its best, when we say that it was *brim full of a contagious joy.* Need I tell you that we are low when it comes to that particular quality in our modern religious circles? But that old-time religion had it! Our fathers and mothers knew the meaning of Bushnell's phrase, "The expulsive power of a new affection."

When Moody and Sankey went to England, the thing that people noticed first of all about them was the fact that they knew how to rejoice in the Lord! Theirs was no cold, conventional, institutionalized religion. A Kingdom not of this world had invaded the souls of these gospel troubadours,

a Kingdom which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

In the third place, that old-time religion *proclaimed the Lordship of Jesus Christ.* To Moody and Sankey, Jesus Christ was the Lord and Savior of the individual soul and of the world. He was "the same yesterday and today and for ever." Like some Himalayan peak, he towered at the center of the Christian revelation. The divine "yes" had sounded in him. He was to them the eternal Son of God, mighty to save.

That old-time religion, you see, did not waste time arguing or debating Jesus. It took him at his word when he said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." God has vested eternal power in him. It is so much easier and more convenient to debate Jesus Christ than to obey him. How we do need that inner vibrant proclamation of the gospel today!

This is no day to whittle down Christ or his gospel. We need to throw away our theological paring knives and lift him up with an exultant confidence that he "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think."

Christian Fellowship

There was that old father of the early Church, Polycarp. I am told that the modern tourist, aboard an ocean liner drawing out of Smyrna, can still look up to a hilltop and see the cypress trees which mark his grave. He was one of the radiant martyrs of the Christian faith in its "first fine careless rapture." As he was being led to the stake, he was told: "All you need to do is to say one word—'Not Christ, but Caesar, is my lord.' Just lay a bit of incense on Caesar's altar." But Polycarp said, "Lo these many years have I known him. He hath done me no harm, only good. How shall I deny him now?" And with radiant countenance he stepped forward to the stake.

The one decisive question of the hour does not concern our institutionalism, our liturgies, our denominationalism; it is rather, *Who is your leader?* To whom are you pledged? Not what, but whom—answer that!

Finally, that old-time religion made much of a grass-roots kind of *Christian fellowship.* As I look back, I see fewer isolated and lonely people in the church of yesterday than there are today. I can recall hitching up the family horse and driving my pastor father on his church circuit up in northern Minnesota. Immediately we had tied the horse, and father had stepped out of the buggy, the people thronged about him. He was in no hurry to get into the church. He took time to visit, to ask questions—How was that sick one? Or that boy away in college? Or that girl? And then, when the preacher entered his pulpit, it mattered not if the sermon went over twenty minutes. No watches were whisked out impatiently. It was not a stop-watch generation.

George Buttrick has mentioned an unusual compliment that was paid him at a college chapel. After the service the small daughter of a faculty member came forward and said, "I didn't mind your sermon one bit; it was just fine. I didn't itch once while you spoke!" We adults "itch" far too much! And sometimes for nothing in particular!

Some of you will recall the protracted meetings and revivals in which people gathered together night after night in intimate, soul-searching fellowship, sometimes for a month at a stretch. Some of you were converted at such meetings. Is that old-fashioned fellowship coming back? I for one believe it is. And strangely enough, through the back door.

Look for instance at the ashrams of E. Stanley Jones, or at the Camps Farthest Out of Glenn Clark. Look at the cell movement of Elton Trueblood, famous Quaker leader; or recall the Oxford Group movement, with its emphasis on intensive, heart-to-heart, mind-to-mind fellowship, led by Frank Buchman. The human heart is hungry for spiritual fellowship. It will have it one way or another. I believe we are rediscovering the inner essence of Christianity to be fellowship—fellowship in Christ; togetherness turned towards great ends.

You see, we are back again where we began, at the perennial values and vitalities embodied in the old time religion of our fathers and mothers—inner certainty, unbounded joy, something we cannot keep to ourselves when it is real; a Christ-oriented faith, joyous fellowship in the Lord. Whatever Jesus Christ touches, that abides, endures and is vibrant with life.

Shout Their Joys

A fellow pastor tells of an experience of his in a large city he visited. After he had returned to his hotel room in the evening, the telephone rang. A voice said, "We want you to come out and join us at one of our homes where we are having a testimony meeting." He was dog tired, but finally agreed to go. What he found when he entered this meeting place was simply an old fashioned testimony meeting in a modern setting. A man and woman stepped forward to say that their marriage relationship had been almost on the rocks, but that Christ had rescued that relationship and redeemed it. Now they were happy again. A woman stood up to tell how she had been a hopeless alcoholic, and how through saving faith in Christ she had been given a new kind of thirst—a thirst for the living God. A man walking back and forth on a club foot said that he had been mentally defeated, but Christ had given him sovereignty over that defeat; now he was glorifying God with that handicap. And so on and on for an hour or more. At the close, all joined hands in a circle, and, our friend says, "You could feel the vibrant power of the Spirit of God lay hold on that entire circle."

> Let those refuse to sing
> Who never knew our God,
> But children of the heavenly King
> Must shout their joys abroad.

Notice, the hymnist says not *may,* or *can,* but must!

The Great Fear

By C. Stanley Lowell

But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him. Mark 9:32.

THERE is nothing so disruptive, so paralyzing and so productive of abnormal behavior as a great fear. The story of Jesus' last week is an account of his followers' mounting dread. Out of the depths of his own vast calm he strove to reassure them. He told them the dangerous and tragic things that were to happen, but he also spoke confidently of the ultimate triumph. Again and again he sought to assuage their fears, appealing to their loyalty, to their faith, to their pride. More than this, he gave them his own memorable example of courage in the face of impending doom. It was all to no avail. Fear like thunderous, storm-driven waters rolled in upon them and engulfed them. Fear gripped them, dominated them, drove them to the point of utter panic. Our text says with simple eloquence, "They were afraid."

Our Plight

Many of the happenings of the last week are clearly the result of fear's propulsion. Others are scarcely less so. The importunate ambition of James and John to obtain high posts in the Kingdom can be explained as the behavior of fearful men. They were anxiously seeking these honors in the shadow of the cross as a bulwark to their slipping courage. Recall Simon Peter's ringing declaration: "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." This was not a strong man's declaration of faith; it was a fearful man's final desperate but ineffectual summons to failing courage. They were afraid. As the crisis mounted, their fear mounted with it until reason and manhood abdicated and hysteria reigned. Fear wrote a grim epitaph to a venture begun with boldness. We read that "they all forsook him, and fled." The deadly operations of a great fear.

C. STANLEY LOWELL is pastor of Wesley Methodist Church, Washington, D. C. A native of Minnesota and a graduate of Yale Divinity School, he served pastorates in Florida and Delaware before going to the nation's capital in 1947. He is president of the Chevy Chase Minister's Council and has been active in the work of the Washington Federation of Churches. His sermon, which was quoted extensively in Washington's press, is a good example of how one pastor treated a current controversial issue from his pulpit.

As I read the story again, America's plight comes to my mind. While grim portents of crisis mount, there is among our people a somewhat kindred feeling of apprehension—a dread which leaps toward panic. This fear is two-fold. There is the fear of the aggressive designs of Soviet Russia and the possibility she may one day conquer the world. There is also a fear that Russian communism is serving as the inspiration for small groups who have banded to take over our country when the time is ripe. Overt stimuli are provided by special interest groups. The Pentagon keeps reminding us how weak we are and what a push-over we would be for Russia unless we increase our spending for arms.

Fear has spread like dry rot among us. The other day a nervous, almost distraught woman came to my study. "They're after me," she said hoarsely. "Now they've started after me." When I questioned her, she showed me a copy of the *Christian Science Monitor* with a marked article on communism. Receiving this through the mail she had felt was the first step in a program of intimidation and persecution to brand her as a Communist. Actually, someone trying to get subscriptions to the *Monitor* had hit on the device of sending out copies of the paper to prospects, first marking some article of special interest, and later following up with an appeal for the subscription. But this woman was so jittery on the communist subject that when she received the marked paper she became almost ready to jump out a window. This incident brought home to me the terrible extent to which this communist hysteria has swept the land. We are desperately afraid.

Apprehension's Grip

This fear explains the power of McCarthyism, which both creates and feeds on fear. Caught in the relentless grip of this apprehension, we are apparently ready to jettison much of our country's sacred heritage. The McCarthys, McCarrans, Veldes, Jenners and their company of self-avowed super-patriots are introducing us to the phenomenon of guilt by association, guilt by fiat, guilt with no chance to prove innocence. Innuendo, slander and downright lies—these are the tactics many think will save America. We have reached the point, as Bishop Oxnam said in an address recently, where a man can be ruined over night. He can be lied about by so-called investigative bodies

with no chance to answer. All this has come about because hidden away in the depths of our being there lies a great fear.

We are afraid of our neighbors. We are afraid of our enemies. We are afraid of our allies. We are afraid of people we know and of people we don't know. Everybody has to be investigated. Everybody among us is suspect—everybody, that is, except McCarthy. How do we know McCarthy is loyal? How do we know he is not the front for a gigantic Communist conspiracy? When you stop to think about it, you realize that he has done pretty well for them. He has everybody in the government scared. The Communists should like that. He has the State Department so jittery that the people in it are afraid to do anything. The Communists should like that. Now he and his fellow travelers are going to work on the school system in a way that may very well wreck it. The Communists should like that.

Americans Are Loyal

Next it will be the churches. They, too, will be investigated for Reds by these self-appointed arbiters of true Americanism. And when the churches are harried and driven and rendered ineffectual in their operations, the Communists will certainly like that. There is one trouble with all this. Who will investigate the investigators? If our colleges and public schools are communist, if our government workers are Communists, if our churches are communist, why aren't McCarthy, Jenner, McCarran and Velde Communists too? How do we know they are not working with the Kremlin behind the scenes to divide our people and destroy our free institutions? They would probably deny this, of course, but how can we trust their denials?

Such is our nervous dread that the time has come to say something everybody seems to have forgotten—that the overwhelming majority of our people are absolutely loyal to their country. This is true of our government workers, nearly two and a half million of whom have been investigated for loyalty since the big scare began. Of this great number, some 2,600 were singled out for further investigation, and 400 were discharged as being of doubtful loyalty. But it is by no means certain that even these 400 were disloyal—there was just some hint or indication of it. Well, 400 out of two and a half million are practically nothing. Our government workers are loyal.

The investigation of our schools and churches will yield a similar result. As a matter of fact—and this is one of the big points—the schools and churches are more responsible, mature and loyal than these power-drunk people who, with pious protestations of their own virtue, propose to investigate others. If men like these are to investigate our schools and churches, then certainly some responsible investigation should be made of them. Let's just everybody start investigating everybody and be done with it. That would give us a Communist police state, which seems to be what we are heading for.

Our fears have raced even further than I have indicated. They have gone to the lengths of absurdity. This whole matter of guilt by association should be examined more closely. Why is it always assumed, when a loyal person is seen with a disloyal one, that it is the loyal person who is in danger?

I think I once mentioned here that a number of years ago I had some meetings with a known Communist. This man had expressed interest in Christianity and had in incipiency a desire to leave the party. Now if I had held a post in government, news of these meetings would certainly have become known. I probably would have mentioned them myself. As a result I would likely have been discharged as a bad security risk. Instead, why shouldn't the Communists have thrown him out for associating with me? Why should everybody instantly assume that I was a weakling and a dupe and that the Communist was converting me? Why shouldn't people have gone around chuckling about the way good old Lowell works on the Communists? Why shouldn't they have said, "Lowell will wear the poor guy down till he makes a Christian out of him and a capitalist to boot"? That is the truth of it, of course. Where did we get the idea anyway that all loyal Americans are hothouse weaklings and that if they get anywhere near a Communist they will turn Red and start reciting Lenin's will?

It is a morbid story. Our fear has now brought us to such bathos that we are afraid to permit a few sailors from a French ship to spend a day ashore lest they turn the country Communist. Members of the American Legion rush down to picket a theater that is showing a picture in which one of the actors has been known to have leftist views. You never can tell—some word or look of his might turn all the people in Washington into Communists. They are such weaklings we have to keep them safely in their nice hothouse.

Answer to Fear

Fear can utterly defeat us; we have only to permit it to do so. The answer to fear is faith. We Americans must have more faith in our own institutions and traditions. We must believe that loyal Americans are stronger than disloyal Communists. Isn't there something strong and bold about a man's being free to think and express himself according to his own convictions? Why should that idea suffer in comparison with the idea of having everybody dragooned and regimented according to the pattern of some politburo? Is freedom less strong, less noble than bondage? Why don't we, then, intrepidly affirm freedom and practice it in a positive way as being infinitely superior to Communist slavery? Instead of disrupting our school system with a garish witch hunt for Communists who are virtually non-existent there, why don't we give our schools more money and help them to do a better job? Instead of screaming about people who read Karl Marx, instead of trying to burn books and picket theaters, why not make more readily available the works of Wash-

ington, Jefferson and Lincoln? Why not celebrate and practice the great American way instead of going over to the totalitarian way? Why not accentuate the positive?

Our subservient acquiescence to the idea of a divided world is in itself evidence of our fear. We are engaged in assiduously walling ourselves off from the Communist world, terminating every possible kind of contact, building the barriers between us and it high and wide. Why? Is it because of the fear that in any ideological give and take we could not stand up in the competition and would be sure to lose out? A lot of people behind the iron curtain do not care for the life there. The idea of freedom could be made to mean something to them. The attitude we assume and the behavior we exhibit will have great influence on what they do in the years to come. It is bad enough that the Communists have put up the iron curtain, but why should we help them by doubling its thickness? Have we not a great deal to gain, and they much to lose, through the interchange of ideas? Or don't we really think so? We cannot win the war of ideas when we close off every avenue by which we might get ideas through. If, by our legislation, our obsession with war preparation and our general attitude, we subscribe to the idea that the world must always be two, we make more definite the division of the world into two hostile camps. We know that, for the time being, there are two worlds, but there can be no harm—and a great deal of good—in going about our business in the belief that the free world and the slave world will one day surely become one free world.

Our Great Concern

Our personal relationship with the Communists is another area in which we must have faith. I don't think we will convert many Communists; in America they are scarce, and those who have been converted are pretty scrubby specimens. Still we ought to have enough self-confidence to try, if we can find one. It's good training if nothing else. We should take every opportunity to demonstrate to the Communists the positive human concern of our Christian faith. We must show them that our concern goes further than theirs—much further. We are just as concerned as they are to fill men's stomachs with food, and we are doing more to achieve this goal than they are. But we are concerned also to provide freedom for the human spirit.

Guilt by association is an unthinkable heresy for those who profess faith in Christ. The fact that Jesus ate with sinners did not mean that he was a sinner. A certain crowd of folks thought he was and said he was, but he wasn't. There is such a thing as good going into the company of evil to transform the evil into good. We must have faith in that. We must, as Christians and as loyal Americans, do what we can to drive out the world's great fear with a greater faith.

Panic Disrupts

"They were afraid." People have done things in panic that they would never have done in normal mood. They have jumped off buildings, exploded dangerous weapons, cowered and shrieked, lied, stolen, murdered—all because they were afraid. For us here in this land of the free and home of the brave, certain disastrous consequences have now been made possible through fear. We can destroy our heritage, we can precipitate an atomic war, we can bring our world to an end—just because we cannot master our fear.

Maybe *we* can never master it, but Christ can. He who promised the Comforter who came is now a steadying hand upon our shoulder. He speaks to us as he did to those of old: "Peace! Be still!" "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "All things are possible to him who believes." "Why are you afraid, O men of little faith?"

"Ah! but we must be realistic," someone says. Realistic? Yes, but terror is not realism—faith is. Let us express a deeper faith in our heritage, a stronger faith in our fellows, a greater faith in God, and that love of all three which casts out fear.

Titles and Texts

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

MURRAY L. WAGNER, Church of the Brethren, Troy, Ohio. "Rural Paths." Jer. 6:16—

Thus says the Lord:
"Stand by the roads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls."

ROBERT J. MACLEOD, South Congregational, Newport, N. H. "Acceptance." Matt. 22:37-39—*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

ANDREW PERRIN BURTON, First Baptist, Rensselaer, N. Y. "You Have a Mighty God." I Pet. 5:6—*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

CHARLIE W. SHEDD, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "You Are Influencing Someone." Acts 7:58-59—*And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed.*

Our Adventure in Two Worlds

By Thomas S. Kepler

DR. A. J. CRONIN titles his autobiography *Adventures in Two Worlds*. Here is a doctor of medicine who has won fame as a novelist; a man who understands the conflict between things of the flesh and things of the spirit; a person who feels the tensions between things secular and things spiritual. This intriguing story of his experiences is prefaced by the author's statement that life has taught him tolerance, moderation and forbearance—qualities lacking in his youth. Above all else is his conviction of the need "of every human heart for God."

So it is with "everyman" as he tries to analyze his adventure in two worlds which he is always trying to bring into a sense of balance and unity. But today is not an easy time in which to find this adventure always satisfying. In the Revolutionary days, Gouverneur Morris, as American representative in Paris, wrote George Washington of Louis XVI: "In ordinary times he would have been a good king; but he has inherited a revolution." Similarly, many people today might work out a solution for the meaning of life, but these are not ordinary times; a revolution is going on in the world, and the finding of purpose in the adventure is not always easy. Yet as Van Wyck Brooks found that most people to whom he talked seemed to have a hunger for affirmations, so most people today are determined to affirm some purpose as they face the adventure of living in two worlds.

Finding a Balance

As we face this adventure, there is the necessity of finding a balance between the world of activism and the world of contemplation. Because of our over-activism in America, we have been called a "cutflower civilization"; we are told that we are more concerned with the *fruits* of living than with the *roots* of living. When Homer Rainey was president of the University of Texas, he said one day in a convocation address that every student should take fifteen minutes alone by himself, just to sit and think. After his address one of the students asked of him, "But, Dr. Rainey, what in the world can a person think about if he spends fifteen minutes a day alone?"

Perhaps we in the West can learn about contemplation from those who live in the East, especially the serious Hindus. Charles Andrews tells of his earlier days, when, as one who worked for social betterment in the slums of South London, he felt that moments spent in quietude and contemplation were wasted moments; he could accomplish far more in active social service. Then at 32 he went to India, and there, from the Indian mystics, especially from Tagore, he learned the value of balancing activism with contemplation. He would see the great Tagore arising several hours before daylight, sitting quietly in the moonlight, finding strength and peace through contemplation. Andrews thus found a new corrective for his activism by the use of contemplation.

The Discipline of Solitude

Two definitions of religion have always appealed to me. One comes from Alfred North Whitehead: "Religion is what one does with one's solitariness; and a person will never be deeply religious unless he takes time to practice solitude." The other definition comes from Eustace Haydon: "Religion is the cooperative quest for the good and satisfying life." We need both "solitariness" and "the cooperative quest" if we are to find a balance between activism and contemplation. The narrator of Jesus' life portrays this balance in Jesus' experiences as he alternates from the temptation scene to the activism in Galilee, from the mount of transfiguration to Jerusalem, from the Mount of Olives to the denunciation of the temple leaders; from the Garden of Gethsemane to Calvary.

If the activistic life is to count, the contemplative life must be practiced. It is true in the life of every research scientist, writer, inventor, artist; without the discipline of solitariness no great creations or discoveries would occur. In the early part of the 16th century Thomas More was the high counselor of Henry VIII, but he needed the value of contemplation. So he went to his estate at Chelsea every Friday for meditation, prayer and devotional reading. For criticizing Henry VIII when he married Anne Boleyn and sought to become temporal head of the Church, More was

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THOMAS S. KEPLER has been professor of New Testament at Oberlin's graduate school of theology since 1946. A native of Iowa, he received his educational training at Cornell College and at Boston, Marburg (Germany) and Cambridge (England) universities. This sermon was preached at the Boston University Alumni Day service during commencement week of 1952.

sent to the London Tower, charged with insubordination and sentenced to be beheaded. But Thomas More's spirit was strong enough to face this death, and only a few hours before his execution he wrote some of the most deeply spiritual prayers to come from any man. Gerald Heard sounds a wise note when he says that there ought to be a saint near each of our great political leaders today, for out of their contemplation saints can give wisdom and perspective to our over-active politicians.

In this adventure in two worlds, there needs to be a balance between the real and the ideal, between life as it is and life as it ought to be. Few men have better resolved the balance between the real and the ideal than Albert Schweitzer. In his earlier days in the Lamberene area of Africa, Dr. Schweitzer was doing carpenter work one day on his hospital. He asked a native, who was watching him, to help him lift a timber. The native replied that he was an educated man and that he felt manual work debasing to one of his position. To this Dr. Schweitzer replied with a smile, "I used to be an intellectual too, but I couldn't live up to it!" Dr. Schweitzer, in tying the *real* to his *ideal,* in relating manual tasks to intellectual hopes, has well illustrated what reverence for life really means. In similar vein, Marie Bashkirtseff tied the real to the ideal. Told one day that a stranger wished to see her, she prayed, "O God, make me worth seeing!"

The Real and the Ideal

Ortega y Gasset, brilliant Spanish thinker, has divided people into two groups—the barbarian and the man of culture. The barbarian lives by the enjoyment of sense experiences; he is content to let his thoughts be controlled by a few slogans from the street; he has no interest in ideals. The man of culture, however, finds his deep enjoyment in those experiences which transcend sense; he wants to work out for himself a philosophy of life which will make his living significant; he is concerned with ideals. He finds a real challenge in Jesus' words: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect."

Some today question the ideal which Jesus gave his followers in 1st century Palestine. They seem to agree with Harry Elmer Barnes that Jesus has less to say to our present day industrial western civilization than some of our 20th century trained leaders. But Barnes fails to realize three factors about the ideal which Jesus gave 1900 years ago: (1) Man today is no different from 1st century man; biological-social evolution has not changed human nature. Man's hopes and dreams, despairs and fears are the same today as they were in Jesus' time. (2) Jesus did not live in a remote part of the oriental world, apart from the flow of life, as Barnes indicates. Jerusalem is far older than Rome or Athens, and Palestine was a vital country visited by many travelers along the caravan routes which crossed it from north to south, from the Great Sea to the Arabian Desert. (3) Every culture has something unique to offer us today. Greece has given us art, science, philosophy; Rome has given us business, law, government; Babylonia has given us the duo-decimal system and India, the decimal system; but the Jews have given us ethical-monotheism as a religion, which, through the Christian "eye of faith," reached its flower in Jesus Christ. Out of this rich religious tradition has come an ideal yet unsurpassed in the evolution of man: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Right over Might

As man strives for a balance between the real and the ideal, he goes through various stages. When young and combative, he questions the superiority of right over might. This clash was forcibly shown in the technicolor film, *Quo Vadis,* which portrays the martyrdom of the Christians at Rome under the insane tyrant Nero. A person witnessing the power of Nero over these Christians might have said: "Certainly these Christians with their right are no match for the might of Rome!" Yet Rome went the way of all flesh when she fell in 486; and the Christian movement with its 650,000,000 members today is the hope of the world!

In middle age, a man begins to realize that the time is shortening for him to grasp his ideal, and that the high hopes he once held may never be achieved. As a person moves into the later days of life, if his pursuit of the ideal is successful, he ought to have the feeling of the late Oliver Wendell Holmes, who in his eighties said, "As I grow old, I grow calm." Holmes tells the secret of this calmness: One evening just before sundown he was walking westward on Pennsylvania Avenue near the Treasury building in the nation's capital. Looking beyond Sherman's statue to the west, he saw the electric lights come out as the sun set. He said to himself, "I wonder if those mechanical clusters of light symbolize the fact that we are under the control of things mechanical?" After a bit, however, as darkness fell and the stars came out, he was able to say, "No. I believe that the stars in the heavens, where they have been from the beginning of the world, give a truer symbol that our universe is still under the control of God." When man in his search for an ideal arrives at this firm faith, he has found a basis for the ultimate balancing of the real with the ideal.

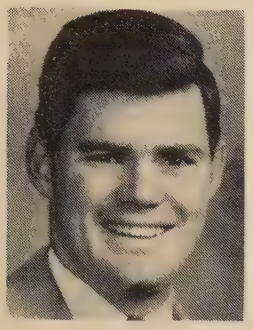
The Joy of Creativity

If man's adventure in two worlds is to be successful, it must show him the balance between the daily discipline of work and the joy of creativity. In 1914 Richard C. Cabot wrote *What Men Live By,* in which he showed the ideal balance as found through work, play, love and worship. His balance of the adventure was so alluring that in ten years the book went into thirty-three editions. One day Canon Sanday of Christ Church College, Oxford University, said to the men in a class: "I want you men to realize that three-fourths of intellectual work is hard discipline, sheer drudgery. But if you can accept this fact, you can make peace with

(Continued on page 18)

SEMINARIAN PREACHER OF THE YEAR

1953 Selection

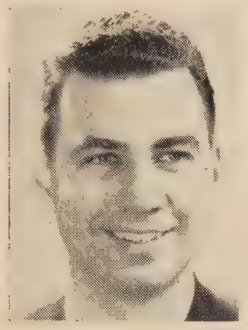


A. Fay Hill

(See page 7)

Union Theological Seminary
New York, N. Y.

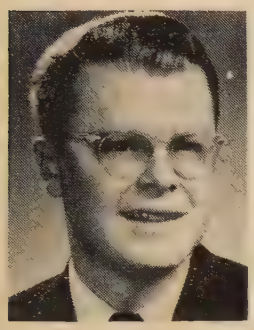
First Selection



Robert R. Huddleston

Garrett Biblical Institute
Evanston, Ill.

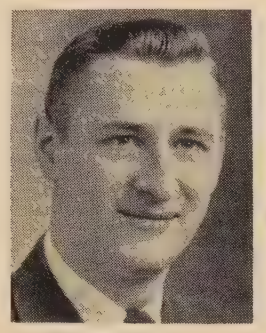
Honorable Mention



E. Eugene Huff

McCormick Theological Seminary
Chicago, Ill.

Second Selection



Owen Miller

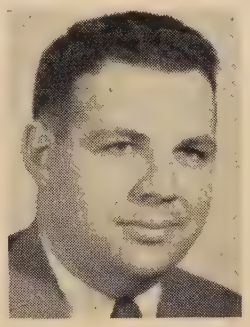
Evangelical Theological Seminary
Naperville, Ill.

Honorable Mention

Benjamin J. Bedenbaugh

Lutheran Theological Southern
Seminary, Columbia, S. C.

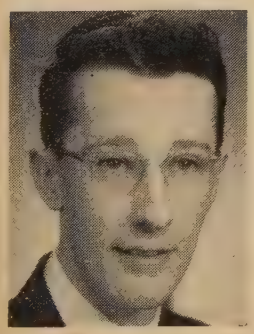
Third Selection



James Reed

College of the Bible
Phillips University
Enid, Okla.

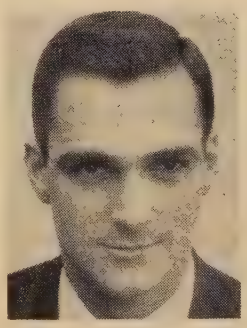
Honorable Mention



Theodore E. Haas

Theological Seminary of the
Evangelical and Reformed Church
Lancaster, Pa.

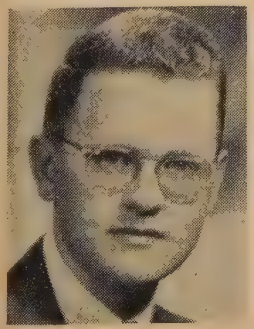
Honorable Mention



Clyde H. Reid, Jr.

Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

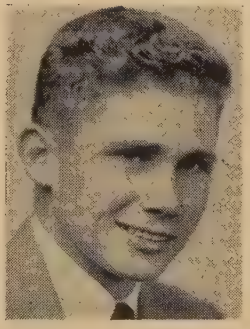
Honorable Mention



Leland L. Harrison

Seabury-Western Theological
Seminary, Evanston, Ill.

Honorable Mention



Conrad C. Steinbrenner

Western Theological Seminary
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Honorable Mention

Pulpit Post

The Bible Story around the World

SIR: The undersigned is engaged in the first global report on the Bible as a living force in the lives of people and is now en route in a year-long flight to more than 60 countries. The story will be told in articles and a book, to be published in the spring of 1954 by Duell, Sloan and Pearce, in collaboration with Little, Brown and Co.

So vast is the field to be covered, and so sincere is the author's desire to render a just report, that he asks all lovers of the Bible—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or Eastern Orthodox—to help him get the facts. However hard one reporter may work, he cannot possibly visit personally all he wishes to contact. Will you ask your readers to submit these questions to their congregations:

1. What does the Bible mean to you?
2. What has the Bible done for you in daily life?
3. Is the Bible being read in your home? If so, by whom: Grandparents? Parents? Children?
4. Are members of your family taking part in Bible study or discussion groups at church?
5. Do schools in your city have Bible classes? If so, please comment on their effectiveness.
6. What do you think can best bring the blessings of the Bible to universal humanity?
7. To Young People: Are you learning to enjoy the Bible, to understand and use it? Where do you learn most about it—in church, Sunday school, home or school?

Readers should address their replies directly to the author at the address given below.

41 E. 60th St., ROLAND HALL SHARP.
New York 22, N. Y.

Enslin and His Critics

SIR: I want to go on record as being in sympathy with the recent printed reaction of Dr. Enslin to the enemies of the new Revised Standard Version. His points are well taken, but I was rather amazed at his righteous indignation concerning an approach which he has evidently been using himself for years. Is there any regular column in print with more Christian cynicism and vitriolic criticism of fellow ministers than that written by Dr. Enslin in The Pulpit? What is good for the fundamentalists should also be good for the liberals. Perhaps some of the ultra-conservatives have learned how to voice their criticism of their brothers from past masters in the art. Of course if we only choose to criticize some things and never attack others, Dr. Enslin is entirely right. However, I am laboring under the conviction that our Pulpit critic is reserving a right for himself which he is choosing to deny for others.

Please keep The Pulpit coming. It is one of the finest magazines I receive. I surely would not be without it.

Greenwood Baptist, L. DOWARD MCBAIN.
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Preachers as Writers

SIR: I wonder if the readers of The Pulpit would appreciate your using, on certain occasions, a small corner of your publication to list the prize offers and awards available to ministers. I am thinking of opportunities such as the $5,000 Religious Novel Contest of the World Publishing Co. and a similar contest by the Zondervan Publishing House. Certainly there are others.

For those not interested in writing books, there must be sermon-writing offers, such as that sponsored this fall by the Freedom Foundation. To be sure, seminary students are not trained to be writers, but there is a real thrill to seeing one's sermon in print.

First Evangelical and Reformed, FRANK A. KOSTYU.
West Alexandria, Ohio.

[We are glad to carry such announcements. The deadline for the Zondervan Publishing House's Christian Fiction contest is Dec. 31, 1954, when manuscripts containing between 50,000 and 100,000 words will be considered. The same publishing house requests manuscripts for a new compilation of stories for children which are not to exceed 1,250 words. The rate of payment is 2 cents per word, and the deadline is June 30, 1953. Full information can be secured by writing to the Book Editor of the firm, Grand Rapids 2, Mich.—THE EDITORS.]

Our Adventure

(Continued from page 16)

yourselves; and that out of the remaining one-fourth of your work you will find deep satisfaction; for you will be doing something in a unique way, never before done by anyone else."

Geniuses are not born; rather they are people with ability who have accepted the fact that daily discipline of hard work must precede creativity. Here, for example, is a young man who would not eat his noonday meal until he had written several thousand words each morning. He writes; he sends his articles to a magazine; rejection slips return. But one day his writings begin to "hit," and before many years had passed he had become the world's foremost playwright, for his name was Bernard Shaw.

The name of Charles F. Kettering stands high among contemporary research scientists; for years he was vice-president in charge of research for General Motors. One of his great discoveries was that of tetra-ethyl lead, which took the "knock" out of gasoline. But this discovery came only after fourteen years of hard discipline and the expenditure of great sums of money. "All research is 99.9 per cent failure," said Mr. Kettering, "but if you succeed once, you're in!" Nor can the creative joy of the devotional life occur unless there is long, hard discipline in devotional exercises. Brother Lawrence in his Carmelite monastery was put among the pots and pans to exercise his sacred duties; and only after ten years of spiritual discipline was he able to see his work in the kitchen as important as that about the altar. After a decade of spiritual discipline he saw his manual labor as a "servant of the servants of God" in the light of a sacrament.

Our adventure is in two worlds; life is always filled with tensions, in which we are trying to resolve a balance between opposite qualities of experience. *That is why it is an adventure!* With Sevier Payne, those of us who have lived long enough, and with some spiritual success, can agree: "Youth is the anticipation of joys that will probably never come. Age is the pleasant retrospect of the joys that did come after all." And with the apostle Paul we can declare our faith about this spiritual adventure, as seen through Christian eyes: "Though the outward nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day."

Note These NEW *and* NEEDED *Harper Books*

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"I have nowhere read a book on the philosophy of religion which was based so completely on the data furnished by the psychology of religion, and the history of religion as this one . . . his knowledge of the history of religion is encyclopedic."—*Charles S. Braden* author of *The Scriptures of Mankind* $5.00

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The vivid journal of one of the last missionaries to come through the "Bamboo Curtain"—of his two years in Red prisons, fourteen months in solitary, of nine months subjection to "brain-washing," and of the deepening faith that was the result of it all.

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No preacher worthy of his calling will want to sidestep a question on which he has convictions merely because it is "hot." To guide these preachers into the traditions of the controversial sermon, the problems it may raise and may solve, and, above all, to show examples of how controversial topics are handled, Dr. Bosley offers now a most unique book.

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A Controversial Article about a Development Which Affects Every Denomination

Kicking Ministers Upstairs

By Carlton Van Ornum

THE movement toward more executive positions in most denominations during the last ten years is becoming a cause for alarm. At a time in world history when the ministry has its best opportunity to direct hearts toward the Cross and away from the hammer and sickle philosophy, hundreds of our best ministers are kicked upstairs to positions of executive leadership.

A recent newspaper editorial, entitled "Senators Scan Service Overhead," says, "The Senate preparedness subcommittee has counted in sixteen camps 95,784 officers and enlisted men, most of them presumably fit for front line duty, serving in noncombat or chair corps jobs." The report states that "sitting at desks, carrying messages, driving automobiles, operating motion picture machines, running PX's and doing similar jobs are nearly enough men to fill our commitment to Europe."

It may not be fair to compare church overhead to that of the armed services, but I think there is a great deal of similarity. When annual conference treasurers, executive secretaries, presidents of colleges and universities, and national board members are taken out of the active ministry to serve desk positions, the ministry is being wantonly drained of its best men.

The Pulpit Is Important

When men like Ralph W. Sockman and Charles R. Goff feel their pulpits are more important than the episcopacy, we have a move in the right direction. Dr. Sockman said: "For many years I have been convinced that the greatest need of the contemporary Church is the strengthening of the local pulpit. There is a tragic lag between the pronouncements of general church conventions and the practices of local church congregations. We can never exalt the pulpit properly as long as we regard it as a steppingstone to administrative positions." Dr. Goff, in reference to his ministry at Chicago Temple, said: "I went there ten years ago without much knowledge of the city. I found out a few things in those ten years, and I don't think that ought to be wasted."

The editors of the *Christian Advocate* said recently: "In these days when we need great preaching so desperately, the pulpit towers far above the administrative (or editorial) desk. The pastor's contacts with the people in the pews—with personal needs, enthusiasms and blind spots—are vastly more important than any knowledge of over-all plans and programs. The best applications of the social gospel start with the use of the personal gospel in the home church, and work for the world-wide Church begins, not in some faraway conference, but in the home community." Amen.

The Remedy

Some of the saddest days for the executive could be the days he realizes there no longer is a specific pulpit from which to preach Sunday after Sunday. He no longer has the same opportunity of pouring out his heart, mind and soul to a hungry congregation. It is not the same when you are addressing the "cream of the crop" in church conferences and rallies across the nation as when you are preaching in the same pulpit Sunday after Sunday to sinners and saints, children and youth, hard men and soft, rich men and poor. A man's ministry grows when he is forced creatively to produce, week after week, year in and year out, with no chance to repeat a sermon and not wanting to because the drawing power of his congregation demands only the best in him. It is true that church executives repeat the same sermon Sunday after Sunday and meeting after meeting. They are victims of their administrative positions.

To limit the siphoning off of our ministers from their pulpits into executive positions, I would have the national boards of our churches examine carefully the positions under their care. They should see if certain laymen could not handle as adequately as ministers the work of distributing some board's literature to every pastor in the nation, thus releasing for the local church a fine pulpiteer who has been lured away by an excellent salary and the prestige of a desk-executive position.

Is it possible that some of these big names are kicked upstairs because there is no adequate church available for them to move into without taking a cut in salary? If we have come to the point where we must subsidize big men in order to keep them in the Church, the ministry has lost the real incentive for its existence. I am in favor of minimum salaries but not of maximum salaries supported by subsidation.

Laymen will take jobs as treasurers and superintendents of hospitals, orphanages and old people's homes, as well as executives of boards. Why a registered nurse of administrative ability and mature years cannot superintend a children's hospital, orphan's home or church hospital is beyond me. The Roman Catholic Church learned years ago to use laymen for its administrative work. We are learning this lesson slowly.

An Oklahoma layman, Aubrey B. Speer, has been named director of youth work and assistant to the executive secretary of the Board of Temperance of the Methodist Church. A native of Dallas, Tex., Mr. Speer gave up a promising career as assistant credit manager for a large department store to enter full-time church work in 1947. Another able layman, Willard A. Roberts of Hartford, Conn., retired from the insurance business and offered his services to the Board of Missions to serve wherever there might be a need. He is now in Mexico City as an assistant without salary in the business office of the Methodist Mission.

Preaching the Gospel

In instances where bankers or accountants have been converted to the ministry, it might look as if their originals talents ought to be used in the church; but the majority of men called to the ministry were called to preach the gospel of Christ to sin sick souls and not roll dimes, nickels and pennies for the church. Let's leave this work to laymen who like to do it and enjoy rendering Christian service in this way, while we keep the minister up on his watchtower, preaching Christ's answer to a distressed world.

While some of our best pulpiteers are producing involved mimeographed materials, designed to promote some board or commission of the church, and are spending their time in high-

CARLTON Van ORNUM has been pastor of First Methodist Church, Camden, N. Y., since 1949. A graduate of Boston University's School of Theology, he is youth director of the Northern New York Conference of his denomination. His sermons for children have appeared in The Pulpit.

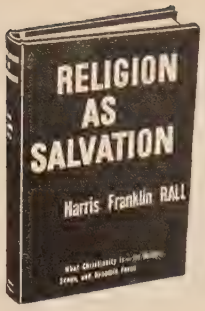
pressure salesmanship and promotion, let us see the danger of such practices. These men are turning out reports and pamphlets for every conceivable work of the church, from how to pack a bundle for Britain to how you may triple church giving in five easy lessons. In permitting this, we are wasting the energy of some of our best men on work that could be done by any smart secretary.

Bishop Kennedy, in a recent book, *With Singleness of Heart,* complains that "the ministry has put more stress on executive ability than it has on sainthood." He quotes Forsythe's admonition to theological students: "Gentlemen, you are not here to graduate in the University of London. You may or may not do that. You are here to graduate in Christ and his ministry." This graduation, says the Bishop, "is the unique thing possessed by the ministry. All of its other activities are but copies of what goes on in the commercial world." Ministers, he believes, must contribute to the world "as graduates of Christ and not as graduates of a business college."

Let's put laymen in executive positions of the church and keeps ministers in the local pulpits where they really belong. Let's stop kicking ministers upstairs!

History of Our Households

BE it ever so hectic, there is no place like home. . . . And they lived scrappily ever after." These two remarks are unfortunately the vessel of more truth than we care to admit. On the beginning of National Family Week, we Americans, many of whom call ourselves Christians, are faced with the disintegration of family life. We know from history that this is a sure sign of the impending decay of a civilization. For, as John Ruskin once wrote, "The history of a nation is not a history of its wars, but the history of its households." Let me begin by giving you the shocking results of my surveys of the way the children and young people in our congregation see our family life as it relates to our Christian professions. Of the young people of high school age to whom I have given the test on their home and its relationship to God all have been from so-called Christian homes. About 50 per cent felt their parents were regular in church attendance. Between one-third and one-half felt their parents were not Christians. About one family out of ten have family devotions. But the real hurt is that only one out of ten of these young people felt that Jesus Christ had anything to do with their family living at home. They listed as the major purposes and goals of their family in this order: (1) Getting material things. (2) Making money to have a good time. (3) Being "respectable." There is the indictment. Is it true?—***John G. Simmons, St. Matthew's Lutheran, North Hollywood, Calif.***



RELIGION AS SALVATION

by Harris Franklin Rall

In this clear and persuasive statement Dr. Rall brings into focus the essentials of contemporary theology and systematically presents the whole truth of the Christian doctrine of salvation. He explores its aspects—individual and social, present and historical, religious and ethical, this world and eternity — revealing God's great work in its true relation to the vital needs of man today.

For preachers, teachers, students, and theologians—*RELIGION AS SALVATION* provides a more adequate understanding of the Christian faith.

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Speaking in Tongues*

FAR from avoiding the error of "speaking in tongues," the Church today slips into it much too easily.

Recent developments in theology have been highlighted by a revival of the thinking of St. Paul and of the Reformation fathers. But the work of our theologians as they discuss the creative and redemptive work of God becomes unbelievably complex. There is an immense list of technical terms which make what we think are the simple verities of the faith completely mystifying. Hardly anything could be more incoherent to the uninitiated than a theological conversation. This does not make theology bad. The issues are complex, and there is necessarily a certain amount of special terminology. Just because the outsider doesn't know the setting and vocabulary of his work does not make the theologian's study any less valid than that of the research physicist. The point at which theology fails the Church is when these academic gentlemen — and more especially their students—take refuge behind their systems. The theologians' responsibility is to the worshiping community. They must speak to the Church at large and not just to each other.

There are styles in theology just as there are styles in dress. Too often a man will seek to follow a theological fashion without getting further than the pat phrases which lie on the surface. Then his listeners are given nothing but a jargon which is meaningless to them as well as to the speaker. It is a kind of intellectual dishonesty that prompts a man to barricade himself behind a wall of obscurity and then blame others for lacking insight. The theologian, whether he be scholar, pastor or layman, must always relate his thinking about God to what he finds in the Bible, in his worship and in his daily life. If not, he is then merely speaking in tongues.—*Thomas Penney Stewart, Union Theological Seminary and New College, Edinburgh.*

• *The Eternal Christ*

I WAS listening recently to a fine speech by Chancellor Gustavson of the University of Nebraska when suddenly a phrase caught my fancy. I have not been able to forget it while preparing this sermon on the theme of Christ, the same yesterday and tomorrow.

Said the chancellor: "If we were to ask Garibaldi or Sir Isaac Newton to visit one of our classrooms, he would feel himself in a situation quite beyond his understanding. He would not understand what we were talking about. When we speak of the destruction of matter it would be beyond him.

"Similarly, if Darwin or Huxley or others of that day were to return to a modern classroom, they would not understand what we were talking about in cell construction and the development of the genes. And I am sure Adam Smith and others of his day would be completely bewildered by our attitude in economics and social welfare. All these men would say, 'Tell us what you mean.'

"But if Moses, Isaiah, Amos, Jeremiah, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Spinoza or Jesus, or any of the other leaders of the world in religion or ethics visited one of our classes dealing with religion, they could listen for five minutes and then lead the class with distinction."—*Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist, Lincoln, Neb.*

Pulpit Calendar

June 7—2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 14—3rd Sunday after Pentecost. Children's Sunday.
June 21—4th Sunday after Pentecost.
June 28—5th Sunday after Pentecost. Nature Sunday. Independence Sunday.
July 1—Dominion Day (Canada).
July 4—Independence Day.
July 5—6th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 12—7th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 19—8th Sunday after Pentecost.
July 26—9th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 2—10th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 9—11th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 16—12th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 23.—13th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 30—14th Sunday after Pentecost.

SEASONS: Whitsuntide, Kingdomtide.

ALTAR COLORS: 2nd Sunday after Pentecost, White; Other Sundays after Pentecost, Green.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *The Church Was There*

I LANDED my plane in 1943 in the lagoon of one of the beautiful south sea islands, and stayed over night there before flying further on patrol and back to home base. The natives were helpful, courteous and friendly. I was shown the stockade where the captives had been held, and the iron pot in which they had been cooked. But this was a thing of the past. Now they were Christian people, for the Church had been there for more than 45 years. We could win the whole world to Christianity if we would but go out and do it. But too often we sit back without even enough concern to begin telling our roommate or the fellow in the next bunk about Christ, our Savior.—*Knute Lee, Chaplain, North Atlantic Constructers, Project Blue Jay, Thule, Greenland.*

• *Nature Abhors A Vacuum*

I LEARNED a valuable lesson from my garden last summer. There was a small area which had been plowed and harrowed, but which I did not wish to plant. I decided to leave it alone and sow it in grass in the fall. In this way I thought I wouldn't have to work it at all. How stupid I was! That section of my garden required more faithful attention and hard work than all the rest. Since there were no vegetables planted there, and no grass seed, the weeds insisted on taking over, and I was battling with them through the whole summer. I learned it was better to plant an area to keep it clean than not to do anything with it. If you don't plant the good seed, nourish and cultivate it, the weeds will take possession and produce an abundant harvest of what you do not want.—*Joseph W. Reeves, Trinitarian Congregational, Northfield, Mass.*

• *Virus of Modern Secularism*

PICKING up a popular magazine which some passengers had left behind them in the Pullman, I glanced idly through the pages. I came upon a highly artistic advertisement which must have cost the advertiser tens of thousands of dollars. All the skill of the artist, the ad writer and the typographer had been enlisted to say just one thing: "Lay our linoleum and have a happy home."

That is secularism in its crudest form, but in a more refined way we are urged on every hand to make life out of things. Find your happiness in a cellophane package; be a distinguished person by drinking a certain brand of liquor; give your children social standing by erecting an aerial on top of your house even if you cannot buy a television set.

The virus of secularism has even saturated the life of the Christian church. We boast of the "largest organ in the city," the "most elaborate program this side of New York" (or maybe it is Buffalo, Chicago, Kansas City or Denver), the "highest paid quartet," the "biggest budget in the conference." In the meantime our altars are empty of penitents, the folk most in need of redemption are at the prize fights, and the growing problem of alcoholism among his church members is the nightmare of almost every pastor.—*Roy L. Smith*

Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

'And It Really Is My Sermon'

A LOT of churches in Delaware County will hear that sermon next Sunday morning, I'll wager," said a friend of mine as we walked out from a service where a visiting preacher had been the star attraction. The congregation had been largely clerical. At first I was inclined to smile at his remark, for the sermon had appeared to me distinctly pedestrian: a minimum of thought and a maximum —and what a maximum—of graceful, wind-filled words. He had said nothing, but how exquisitely he had done it! It was essentially of the sort—perhaps just a little more so—which I have come to expect when I learn that, to capture this particular big shot who is being stalked, it has become necessary to double the usual honorarium.

But my smile soon faded, and frequently since that afternoon my friend's words have resounded in my ears, and ominously. Not because several other congregations might be exposed to what I had listened to. That did not particularly worry me, for certainly there was nothing at all offensive in the sermon as originally preached. Very possibly it might even prove a pleasant change of fare. My concern was—and is—that preachers are so regularly doing this sort of thing that it is taken as a matter of course.

Why is it that published volumes of sermons have the large sale they do? Several of my friends, high in the publishing game, assure me that these volumes are their real money-makers. Why is it that so many "Letters to the Editor" in journals such as this—now I am casting myself in the role of Ajax—ask for more sermons and quotable illustrations?

It is easy to fall into ruts, to become isolated, when week after week a man is in his own pulpit with little or no opportunity to appraise his own effectiveness by seeing how his fellow preachers are attempting the common task. Naturally it is a real treat for the journeyman preacher to find himself in the pew, not to worship but to see himself—his strength and weakness—as he listens to another. How much easier it is to detect flaws and weaknesses that way! Thus the printed sermon, too, may well serve a useful and valuable purpose: as an aid to seeing ourselves as other see us and as a vehicle for providing an occasional hint of how to do our task better.

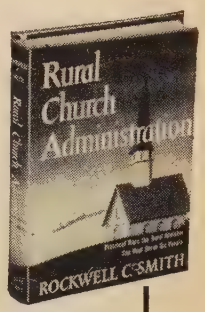
While there are undoubtedly many who read sermons for that purpose, it is silly and unrealistic to overlook the fact that there are many others whose object is very different. Their concern is not to observe what sort of subjects are being chosen, how a skilled preacher presents his material, how he makes it alive and interesting and compelling. Instead they want quotable material, and this means not seeds but full-flowering bushes. Too frequently the sermon read becomes their sermon, that is, one presented as theirs.

I realize perfectly that this is a very serious charge. It is, and I am not making it lightly. Not only from personal experience, but from a large correspondence with other preachers, I can support my charge by chapter and verse. A recent letter from a man of long experience and of singularly generous and sweet spirit, whose name would be familiar to every reader of this column, ends with these words: "Have you done an article as yet on Pulpit Plagiarism? If so I have missed it. Such an article is needed. It is hard to account for this form of pilfering since a single sentence of credit to the author would save the preacher's face." I have other letters, and some of them are far less pacific and more specific. I quote this one, for the word he uses, *pilfering*, is rightly chosen. That is what it is.

Men who would never dream of stealing a neighbor's pocketbook do not hesitate to steal his sermon and parade it as their own. And I insist that a few superficial changes of vocabulary or the occasional substitution of an active voice for the passive in no wise alters the fact. It is stealing and utterly unworthy of any honest man, most of all a minister of Jesus Christ. Like all bad habits, this one is very insidious and fast growing. Its effects are fatal. How a preacher can view himself morning after morning in his mirror as he shaves—what a place of private confessional that is —with this on his conscience is beyond me. There is much more that could be said. This is simply the text and theme sentence. I commend the development of the full sermon to my brethren who have little time to read anything save sermons.

Rural Church Administration

by Rockwell C. Smith



⬠ PRACTICAL is the word that best describes this book. The qualifications of a rural pastor, his schedule, his personal ministry, how to plan and raise a parish budget—all these and many other aspects of the rural minister's work are dealt with in concrete detail.

In "a society governed less by the clock and more by the calendar," as the author describes the rural community, the minister faces unique problems. They are the situations encountered in serving both farm and nonfarm people, in preaching and ministering to congregations in small towns as well as in the open country. Dr. Smith highlights these problems and offers workable solutions to them.

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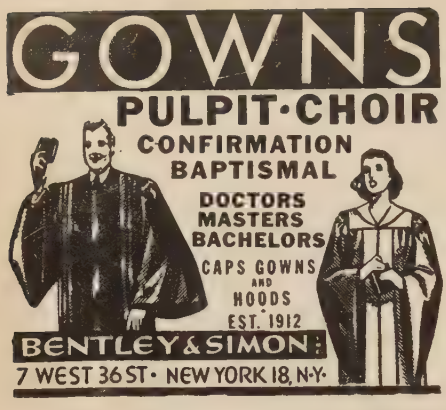

Sermon Summaries

Weather-Wise and Faith-Foolish

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.—Eccles. 2:4.

HUMANKIND today has largely resigned itself to being observers of the wind and regarders of the clouds. At the voice of the radio, the newspaper and the commentator we sigh and surrender with, "Well, there's nothing we can do about it."

Many people—not all, heaven be praised—have almost deliberately become pole-sitters, sitdown strikers, noncooperators and innocent bystanders when they come to the basic and elemental processes of life itself. A favorite slogan is, "The show must go on but we are not actors in it." Our modern existence seems to have cut the creative instinct out of our spiritual anatomy. We may have given up the old fallacy that God is an absentee God who made the world and then left it to run itself, but in practice our creed is that of a dormant spectator.

Whatever else we see in the figure and spirit of Jesus, we see One for whom the power lines of life were all aquiver with the creative connection between man and God. We have almost cut those power lines; the doleful word goes around, "Sorry, line out of order; connection broken." It is amazing to find a primary modern poet and an American military leader in full agreement on our pitiable sickness as reserved-seat observers of wind and cloud. T. S. Eliot asks:

> Endless invention! Endless experiment!
> But where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

And General Omar Bradley has said: "Our knowledge of science has outstripped our capacity to control it. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

Darkened by the clouds of world events and the winds of personal confusion, must we never again sow the seeds and reap the harvest of the spirit within us? Must our seed-supply of the soul be stored in warehouses of tradition and our stockpile of hope be only a high dry mountain of barren lost chances? Must push buttons and gadgets take the place of inspiration while we hear only a faint whine from the elemental energies of the soul? Since there is no other real question before the house, must we make the motion to adjourn? Is destiny dead and human significance a simpleton's vain dream? Or was the word of Jesus, "I am come that they might have life more abundantly," the only true headline news that man ever heard about himself?

What can we do about it? We can do everything about it! Nobody else

A Call to Silence

Let not the silence frighten thee . . . .
It is an open space for God
To speak a word
Thou hast not heard.

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can! The essential elements are still in our hands. Right now is a tremendous, glorious moment for creating our own personality; an open-door hunting season for capturing and taming our moods, tempers and characters; a sunshiny day for our veritable inwardness; a superb time for sailing on the seas of growth, contentment and satisfaction; a very busy market day for cashing-in on our known spiritual values—God's investments in us. If we don't individually cash in on our capital stock, the world will never collectively recover its coupons.

It is doubtful if the world ever had a better day for genuine harvests of the soul. But he that observeth the wind shall not reap; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. That law is fixed and sure.—*George Lawrence Parker, Newton, Mass.*

The Smile of God

(A Communion Thought)

THE TABLE set before us does not suggest the frown but the smile of God.

A number of years ago I read the story of a man whose chief aim in life was to attain great wealth. In realizing this ambition, he neglected many things, but business success made possible much that money could buy, including a fine residence. He retired to enjoy his wealth and his home. Then death struck, taking first his children, then his wife. He returned from the cemetery to a now desolate house.

One day in his loneliness and depression he went to the attic. There he spied his old trunk—the one he had had when he went away to school. Opening it without knowing why, he found, among other things, a pair of little shoes. They were, he knew, his baby shoes, which his mother must have put there. On the sole of one he found writing, in his mother's hand, that reminded him of a story she had told him.

One day when he was a little tot, he and his mother were in the parlor when suddenly the sun shone in, making a bright spot on the floor. The little fellow cried out, "Mamma, what's that?" "It is God's smile," she told him as she was about to leave the room. On her return, she saw the little fellow with feet huddled together, trying to stand in the spot of sunlight. "I's standin' in Dod's smile," he told her.

On the sole of the little shoe, the man in the attic read: "This is the pair of little shoes my baby wore the day he said he was standing in God's smile. May he always stand in the smile of God!" He dropped his head, for he knew he had failed. In pursuing his ambition, he had forgotten the "smile of God" and all that it stood for. That day a lonely, broken man went to his knees, seeking forgiveness and a return to the "smile of God." In his return, with a new ambition, he now sought to redeem himself through service.

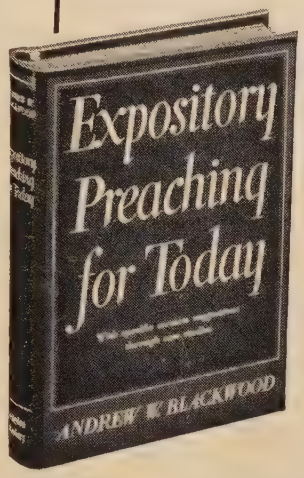
Beloved, this Lord's Table spread before us, with its symbols of the Broken Body and the Shed Blood, stands for the good will, the "smile of God." His face is turned toward you, not with a frown, but with the smile of love and mercy.

Do I speak to anyone here who, through thoughtlessness, neglect, false ambition or sin, has retreated from the "smile of God"? One who is no longer conscious of that smile—that bright spot in life? Who might repeat, "Where is the blessedness I knew, when first I saw the Lord?" If so, here, today, through repentance and the Holy Communion, come back into the warm, glowing "smile of God." That smile, just now, is saying to you, "Return unto me and I will return unto you."

And may you, to whom this word does not so sharply apply, or whose religion has become formal, here, to-

The new book

by Andrew W. Blackwood



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day, catch a new and refreshing consciousness of his smile.

He smiles at you, and you, in partaking of the Holy Communion, are, as it were, smiling back at him. God bless you as you smile at each other! —*George S. Mott Doremus, Girard, Pennsylvania.*

The Meat of the Spirit

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.—John 4:34.

THE all-inclusive life purpose of Jesus consisted in doing the will of God. It was the driving power of his life. This we see illuminated in the incident at the well in Samaria. Tired and hungry, Jesus sat down by the well while the disciples entered the village near by for provisions. As he was resting there, a woman who had lost her way in life came to fetch her daily supply of water. Challenged by the situation, Jesus led her through wise counseling into the way of life. When the disciples returned and urged him to eat, he brushed aside their entreaties. He had found his refreshment not from food but from the work he had done. He told them: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

God has a purpose for every life. Our purpose in life is not to make a living but to glorify God in our work. Life is a precious gift, far too precious to waste in just "making our bread and butter." We are to glorify God in the way we make our living. If man lives only to eat, his life purpose is conceived too narrowly and his existence is drab, pinched and barren. His life is only "skin and bones." But the "meaty" life is one that finds itself in doing God's will.

The will of God is the standard of life which draws us into the fellowship of Jesus. Whoever has accepted the will of God as the decisive factor in his life will find in it also a sustaining power which upholds him in difficult circumstances. If a man is conscious of doing God's will, it gives him sufficient strength to stand alone, if need be, against the world.

The will of God, though mysterious, is not inscrutable. No one can look down the corridors of time and see his whole life laid out before him. Nor do we need to have such knowledge. To do God's will, we must do the first thing at hand, and then the second becomes more clearly understood. We learn to know God's will more fully as we act on that part of his will already known. If we refuse to do the will of God already known to us, the gateway of truth is closed to us. "The best things I know," said St. Theresa, "came to me not by revelation but by obedience." The obedience of faith is not a "way of talking" but a "way of walking," as Dean Inge reminds us. As we walk, we learn to know God's will more fully: step by step the way opens up before us. —*Karl H. A. Rest, Emanuel Evangelical and Reformed, Manchester, Mich.*

Crosses

THE cross that tore at his tender heart
Was dagger-sharp, and cold;
The cross that drained his paschal blood
Was of wooden, rough-hewn mold;
The cross of his lingering loneliness
Is warped, unsightly, old;
The cross that crowns the altar cloth
Is graceful, glittering, gold.

C. W. VANDENBERGH.

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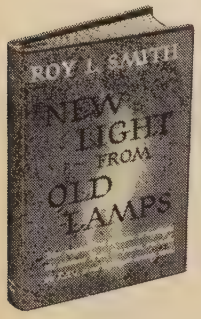

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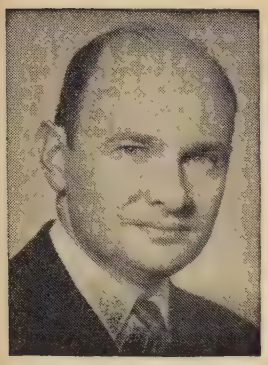

Come Let Us Worship

By Clarence Seidenspinner

The Silent Witness of Worship

JUST as the foothills surround the mountains, so the sublime experience of divine worship is buttressed and reinforced by a number of related factors. What the churches do in terms of program, what their pastors preach, how churches build and what they do with their buildings all constitute the silent witness of worship.

On a recent trip through a number of states, I was impressed again by the negative witness of far too many church buildings. Instead of being the most beautiful buildings in the city, they were often the ugliest. Many of them were little better than boxes, punctured here and there with cheap glass. Their interiors were nothing but auditoriums, poorly arranged and cluttered with miscellaneous bric-a-brac. If the church is the symbol of the God served by its people, the only implication we could draw concerning the nature of deity is that of a banal, disorderly, cheap spirit. What a lamentable way to belie the nature of Almighty God! With the great pattern forms of the centuries at the disposal of congregations, why can't beautiful buildings be erected that will buttress the experience of public worship? Even if a congregation inherits a nondescript building, why can't significant symbols and touches of beauty be placed within the church to redeem the architecture as much as possible?

In one large city, I tried to get into a downtown church adjacent to the business section. It was an immense, gloomy Romanesque building. The front doors were locked as is, alas, too often the case. After trying all the obvious entrances, I discovered a janitor's basement door unlocked and entered that. Though my visit occurred on the Wednesday after Easter, the chancel of the church was in disorder. Faded Easter lilies were still grouped before the chancel. There was not a single touch of religious symbolism in the whole chancel, unless one mistakes the ambo for a religious symbol. Surrounding this gloomy church, however, were the sleek, beautiful buildings of the city, erected with an eye for function, and contemporary utility. What a contrast between the house of God and the business and civic houses of the community!

Very different was the witness of a sister church on the other side of the business district of this city. It, too, was reminiscent of the Romanesque period, with a touch of the Spanish influence. It had warmth, grace and charm, however. The doors of the church were open because its God was alive. The chancel had recently been remodeled to make a place of breathtaking wonder. Three exquisite windows surrounded the altar. The lancet window to the left represented prophecy; a superb rose window above the altar depicted the incarnation in the form of the mother and child; the lancet window to the right of the altar pictured the fulfilment of prophecy in the preaching of the Word by the Apostle Paul. Here was visible witness to the God of beauty and life. This congregation recognized the importance of the open church as a silent

(Continued on page 28)

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Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Wedding Music

RECENTLY, wedding music has come in for more than its share of criticism. A commission of the Episcopal diocese of central New York "deplores the elements of secularism in the musical practices of a religious service" and blacklists "O Promise Me" and "I Love You Truly."

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston joins the Episcopalians in deploring the perennial wedding favorites, and denounces them with apostolic fervor. The auxiliary bishop of the diocese is quoted as saying, "A music commission appointed by Archbishop Cushing drafted the regulations, and copies have been sent to all the choirmasters and organists known to the commission. The purpose of the new edict is to bring back the traditional and strictly religious type of music. Music should be a part of the service and not a display of the voice. Anything operatic, or purely solo technique, showing off the voice, is wrong." If that is true, then it's "curtains" for "Because" and Malotte's "The Lord's Prayer," whose climaxes are unquestionably operatic and showy.

Love and Emotions

If marital love is merely a matter of mind, then let the music be coldly intellectual. But if true love also includes the emotions, then there is a place for sentimental music, the critics to the contrary!

Regardless of our mental attainments, we are still creatures of the heart. That being true, romance has as much a place in the music of the marriage ceremony as it did in the courtship that is climaxed with the wedding. Few love stories are more tender than that of Carrie Jacobs Bond and her husband. What if her song, "I Love You Truly," is sentimental? Are we to become hard-hearted just because we have acquired a few advanced degrees?

Remember, it is the older men who look with scorn upon the music that delights the youthful romantic heart; it is the high ecclesiastic, whose sentimental attachment to his liturgy can never be called in question, who deplores the sentimental feelings associated with these much-maligned wedding favorites. With due respect for the ancient perfectionists, we ask, could anything be duller than an all-Palestrina wedding?

Again, while there is a pronounced difference between an anthem and a popular song, there are many musical selections which can be classified as neither sacred nor secular. Depending upon the circumstances of their use and the skill of the instrumentalist or soloist, some sacred numbers can be designated secular and vice versa.

If we ban Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" as secular, then we will have to eliminate his tune to which we sing "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." He never composed anything more secular. The music is taken from a *Lied* composed in 1840 "to celebrate the anniversary of printing." Mendelssohn himself said of the adaptation of his music for a hymn, "I think there ought to be other words. If the right ones are found, I am sure that piece will be liked very much by the singers and the hearers, but it will *never* do to sacred words." However, time proved the master was wrong, as it may prove the critics of his wedding march equally in error.

Again, George J. Webb wrote a tune (named *Webb* for himself) for a secular poem, " 'Tis Dawn, the Lark Is Singing." An editor later matched the tune with George Duffield's sacred poem on the death of Dudley Tyng, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus," producing as perfect a wedding of words and music as has ever been achieved.

Cooperation Needed

Some musicians have recognized the tune *Greenville* ("Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy") as a folk tune, "Go Tell Aunt Nancy, the Old Gray Goose Is Dead," but that does not detract from the music's usefulness as a hymn tune. Haydn's *Austrian Hymn* was composed for a poem in honor of his Emperor's birthday, February 12, 1797, and is as secular as can be. But, matched with the stanzas of "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," it ranks with the most stirring sacred tunes in hymnody.

It may be that, long after the more ambitious compositions of Wagner and Mendelssohn have run their course, many selections which are used in today's church weddings will gradually come to be recognized as part of the traditional religious music of the faith.

Since the church wedding ceremony is a religious service, the minister can always encourage the bridal couple to include "Love Divine, all Love Excelling" and "O Perfect Love, All Human Thoughts Transcending." The marriage ceremony should never be one the church sets up without any regard for the wishes of the participants; after all, *they* are the ones being married. Nor should it be a ceremony in which the bride expects the minister to comply without question to all her requests. Mutual give-and-take can prepare the way for a ceremony of deep religious significance for all concerned.

Silent Witness

(Continued from page 27)

witness to worship. The open church says that God is all important and may be worshiped at any time; that the presence of a self-important preacher is not necessary for the sublime experience of worship.

In another large city, a Georgian building adjacent to the business section presented a strange faith to the citizens. The name of the church was displayed prominently enough. Then, in a tremendous plaque at the base of the twin towers, there was a list of all the preachers who had ever served that church. Finally, at the base of another twin tower, for all passers-by to see, was a list of the important historical moments in the life of the church. Not a word, mind you, about God or the special function of the church. All attention was centered upon man and his action. The front doors were locked, and the whole building implied that worship was possible only when an important pastor was present.

Something similar was evident in another community. Across the street from a beautiful college campus, with charming Georgian buildings, was a large, recently built Gothic church. The congregation had an entire city block at its disposal and might well have built a beautiful colonial church in the center of this space to harmonize with the campus, especially since the church was used as a college chapel. This would have tied the church and the college together in architectural symbolism. As a result of its Gothic style, however, the church was separated from the campus, and the implication was made that religion was irrelevant. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that, adjacent to the campus where the highest standards of literacy, philosophical and artistic taste were set forth, the preacher in this Gothic mausoleum had chosen for his sermon topic the following Sunday: "Heat, Light and Power."

ROUNDUP

Books in Brief

Sermons

★★SERMONS ON THE PARABLES OF JESUS. By **Charles M. Crowe.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.50. Next to the Ten Commandments, the parables of Jesus are the most-used subject for sermon series. Preachers who are searching for live illustrations for such a series will consider this book literally a gold mine. Dr. Crowe must actually go through the 24 hours of every day with a pencil poised to record every illustration which crosses his path. For these 15 sermons, this reviewer counted no less than 146! And most of them are timely and usable, too. They are taken from many sources—science, biography, newspaper stories, drama, history, poetry, fiction, sports, missions, industry, medicine, astronomy and current magazines, including The Pulpit! The author's catchy sermon title for each parable reflects his belief that these teachings of Christ can help to meet the spiritual needs of men living in the 20th century.—*Alton M. Motter, Managing Editor, The Pulpit; Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

★★FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT. By **Robert Menzies.** Abingdon-Cokesbury, $2.00. Eighteen stirring sermons by a Scottish preacher. Out of 37 years' active ministry he treats realistically the common hindrances to Christian faith and life. Dr. Menzies is a master of good sermon techniques—clear outlines with skilful transitions, apt and memorable illustrations, energetic vocabulary and honest use of texts. He coins many a quotable phrase. He does much more than diagnose the situation of modern man; he leads him to the divine resources of wisdom, strength and courage. In both content and expression this is a book of *good* sermons. In my catalog Robert Menzies finds a place on the same page with my favorite Scottish preachers, Arthur Gossip, James Stuart and James Reid.—*Amos John Traver, Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio.*

THE KINGDOM IS YOURS. By **Louis H. Evans.** Fleming H. Revell Company, $2.50 A volume of thirteen sermons, their author is pastor of a congregation of 6000 members, the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, California. These sermons are based on the general theme: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." These discourses are practical and rich in fresh, vital, compelling illustrations. Specimen sermon titles are "The King Is Here," "Ladies and Gentlemen, Meet the King!" "The Regal Home," and "Thine Is the Kingdom!" This volume provides excellent reading for laymen and presents the preacher with an opportunity to study an interesting homiletical approach.—*A. R. Addy, Epiphany Lutheran, Elmhurst, Ill.*

GOD'S WAYS AND OURS. By **Frederick M. Morris.** Exposition Press, $3.00. This book of twenty sermonettes, on important themes, is readable, coherent and reflective. Dean Morris communicates his ideas in a clear and decisive style, growing out of many years of pastoral experience. We are not convinced, however, that these sermons would cause hearers to be moved to action. Only occasionally does the reader feel that he is personally involved in all of this. Perhaps it could be said that these sermons are concerned "more with mankind than with me." Apart from this, there is much sermonically suggestive material for the preacher who reads.—*Granger E. Westberg, Chaplain, University of Chicago Clinics, Chicago.*

THE LITTLE JETTS YOUTH TALKS. By **Wade C. Smith.** W. A. Wilde, $2.00. Here is a book that young people will read with spiritual profit, if they can be led beyond the rather abstruse title and into the volume itself. Each chapter, based on a biblical event, is an appropriate sermonette written in the language of youth. The lively, direct conversational style is captivating. The general appeal might be more clearly extended to girls as well as boys if the author had not repeated throughout the book such masculine salutations as "Say fellows" and "Listen fellows." On the other hand, this may enhance the appeal among girls. In any case it is a good book for every teen-ager —and some adults to read.—*Virgil A. Kraft, Minister, Northwestern University Chapel in Chicago.*

The Bible

THE UNFOLDING DRAMA OF THE BIBLE. By **Bernard W. Anderson.** Association Press, 50 cents. Eight studies for discussion groups outlined as the drama of man's "predicament" and God's gracious intervention. The main references for further study—Niebuhr, Tillich, T. S. Eliot, Cullman and the author's own *Rediscovering the Bible*—indicate the theological presuppositions: "The key word for Bible study is *encounter.*" Consequently, although the import of the drama is the grace of God, words connoting hostility predominate. *Judgment, encounter,* and *confront* recur 12, 10, and 4 times respectively in these 60 pages, while *love,* though recognized as "the highest endowment of God's Spirit," occurs only twice. This masterful condensation of the biblical revelation achieves the author's purpose to introduce the Bible as a whole and to urge the importance of reading it not as a textbook but as "a letter from God with your personal address on it." But is *encounter* the key, or is it *love?*—*Raymond T. Stamm, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.*

★JOHN WESLEY'S NEW TESTAMENT. Winston, $2.50. Two hundred years ago scholarly John Wesley acted on his belief that the King James Version could be improved along three lines: better text, better sense, better English. This is a timely reprint of an edition of 15 years ago where upwards of 12,000 deviations from the King James (as noted by George Croft Call) are indicated in italics. More than half of Wesley's changes are found in the current Revised Standard Version, such as shifting "shall" to "will," pruning redundancies, dropping superfluous words and turning around inverted sentences. Intelligibility, insight and beauty are conveyed by this sound revision from the original Greek.—*James V. Claypool, Secretary, American Bible Society, Chicago.*

★THE BEATITUDES. By **Hugh Martin.** Harper, $1.00. Valuable sermon material is presented scholarly, but not tediously, in this fresh application to modern life of the two-century-old beatitudes. Fitting illustrations enrich the treatment and increase the value of the book for the preacher. The author labors his rejection of the pacifist position as he writes in three chapters of this conviction. Nevertheless, here is a relevant exposition with practical insights for pew and pulpit alike.—*Dale S. Bringman, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Harrisburg, Pa.*

Devotional

★★JESUS THROUGH THE CENTURIES—HIS FIGURE AND TEACHINGS AS REFLECTED IN THE MINDS OF MANY MEN. By **Manuel Komroff.** Sloane, $6.00. Of the making of anthologies there is no end. And the selections are as varied as their authors' interests. To compile a selection of readings from the vast store of literature about Jesus means digging in a colossal mine of writing. Manuel Komroff has done a superb task in this present anthology, for he has tried to show the figure of Jesus as he appeared to man through many generations. "Each generation finds its own reflection in Jesus. And each individual creates him through his own spiritual sorrow," says the author. I find the work alive and fascinating because it gives evaluation to the historical aspects of the thought about Jesus. Here is a magnificent aid to the preacher, offering him a friendly guide and scholarly interpreter as he traverses the story of Jesus through literature from the New Testament to Toynbee.—*Clifford Ansgar Nelson, Gloria Del Lutheran, St. Paul, Minn.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

April	May	This Month	*An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.*
8	3	1	**Jesus Christ and His Cross.** *F. W. Dillistone. Westminster,* $2.50
2	2	2	**Rediscovering Jesus.** *Jack Finegan. Association Press,* $2.50
4	1	3	**Joyous Adventure.** *David A. McLennan. Harper,* $2.50
	4	4	**The Resurrection and the Life.** *Leslie D. Weatherhead. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $1.00
6	5	5	**Fulfill Thy Ministry.** *C. S. Neill. Harper,* $2.00
7	6	6	**Ride the Wild Horses.** *J. Wallace Hamilton. Revell,* $2.50
9	7	7	**Here Is My Method.** *Donald Macleod. Revell,* $2.50
	9	8	**The Gospels.** *Translated by J. B. Phillips. Macmillan,* $2.75
	10	9	**The Interpreter's Bible.** *Vol. X. Abingdon-Cokesbury,* $8.75
		10	**Communion Through Preaching.** *Henry Sloane Coffin. Scribners,* $2.50

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

FOR ALL MINISTERS the annual recurrence at Yale University of the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching is an event of major importance. This year the lecturer was Professor Halford E. Luccock. I was keen to learn what topic he would choose, and I recalled with humbled memory my own reaction when I was waited upon with an invitation to give these lectures in 1939. At that time, I felt that everything had already been said on the subject of preaching. And I said so. (They finally let me talk on "What is Christianity?" a subject which the committee thought would have some relevance to preaching!) But now comes Simeon Stylites in the person of Dr. Luccock with this arresting definition of preaching: "Communicating the gospel." This was a new approach. Why hadn't I thought of it myself! I venture to say that this simple formulation will take its place beside that famous definition by Phillips Brooks, "Truth through personality," as one of the two most illuminating conceptions of preaching found in the entire library of this lectureship. The gospel never made greater demands upon its preachers than it does today. Many preachers either substitute moral exhortation for the gospel, or persist in using the traditional vocabulary of orthodoxy which fails to communicate anything but the preacher's unction. We shall await the publication of this 1953 series of Beecher Lectures with the liveliest expectation.

The Lyman Beecher Lectures

The Book of the Month

THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE CHURCH, *by Emil Brunner. Westminster Press, $2.75.*

I DO NOT AGREE with the overall thesis of this book, but there are so many invaluable insights in the course of its argument, and it is so provocative of critical thought, that I must recommend it to our readers. Dr. Brunner is one of my favorite theologians. But I could not accept his doctrine that the *ecclesia* of the New Testament was simply a spiritual fellowship without organs and functions. To be sure, it emerged in an explosive burst of faith and feeling, but it could not have survived in history had it not taken on some institutional form. It seems to me that Dr. Brunner holds an indefensible prejudice against institutions as such. However, the development of the *ecclesia* into the particular kind of institution (hierarchical) which transformed it into something essentially unlike itself was never described with clearer insight than in these pages. But I think he feels himself to be more radical, more heretical perhaps, than he really is. For he admits at one point that "the New Testament church was an astonishingly well-ordered whole without such a formal hierarchy, without such delimitation of competence and regulation of work." This suggests that his argument is really directed not at organization as such, but against the hierarchical and authoritarian kind of organization. There are numerous places where the author seems to give back with one hand what he has taken away with the other. This is particularly evident in his treatment of the modern movement for a united church. If Dr. Brunner had formulated his thesis in terms of the apostasy of the church into a hierarchical and sacerdotal type of institution, and challenged not Roman Catholicism alone, but Protestantism also, including the ecumenical movement, his contribution would have been no less arresting and more convincing than his interpretation of New Testament Christianity as a soul without a body.

A Thought for the Month

WHAT AN ERROR it is to think of God's communications to us as limited to certain authoritative revelations delivered long ago and carried down to us by the record then made! These revelations were true and upon them the hinges of history have no doubt turned. They mark decisive points in the spiritual experience of the race. But the God who spoke to the fathers by prophet and apostle, and supremely to his Son, still speaks to us in many ways. He did not speak to us through them in order that he might avoid the necessity of speaking further. Quite the contrary. Our God is a speaking God, a visiting God, who forever stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, desiring to come in and abide with us. We are not shut up to a knowledge of him gained at second-hand from others to whom he deigned to speak once for all. He would speak to us also. In an infinite variety of ways his voice comes to us. The very winds are his messengers and flames of fire his ministers—that is to say, these are the language that he sometimes uses for his speech with men. The silence is sometimes his voice, but he also speaks in an illness, or a defeat, or a success, or a friendship, or a book, or any unexpected event, or by the life of a little child. The changing seasons, the starry heavens, all the processes of nature and the unfolding events of history—these are the language of God to him who will open his heart to understand. God's word is a living word, not a phonograph record. If we will but listen we can catch the accent of the Holy Ghost.

God's Living Voice

Charles Clayton Morrison

For the Record—

ONE of the most important events in the history of modern Christendom will take place less than 45 minutes away from the editorial offices of The Pulpit in August 1954. This will be the meeting of the second Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held on the campus of Northwestern University, located in Evanston along lovely Lake Michigan on the northern edge of Chicago.

Gathering for the first time since the constituting sessions at Amsterdam in 1948, the formal sessions of the Assembly will be held August 15-31. The delegates from nearly 150 member churches in 48 nations will consider the theme, "Christ—The Hope of the World," as it is related to faith and order, evangelism, social problems, international affairs, intergroup relations and the laity.

Important as these official sessions will be, the most interesting news for the clergymen of the United States and Canada is the series of special events being planned for visitors and their families.

Perhaps the most outstanding project will be the "Chicago Summer Ecumenical Institute—1954" to be held during the two weeks preceding the Assembly, August 2-14. This will be sponsored and directed by the theological schools of greater Chicago, which are reputed to have the largest concentration of theological students in the world. In addition to selected faculty members from these schools, more than 30 non-American theological leaders will serve on an enlarged faculty which will be able to accommodate 2,000 clergymen and interested laymen. In conversations with the executive secretary of the Assembly, Robert S. Bilheimer, we are informed that these classes will be open to all on a first come, first served basis.

The most outstanding event probably will be the impressive, dramatic service of worship to be held on the Sunday evening of August 14 in Chicago's Soldier's Field, an outdoor stadium which seats some 100,000 people.

We have been assured that a number of public evening meetings also will be held in Northwestern University's McGaw Hall, which seats over 6,000 persons. These sessions will deal with some of the sub-topics of the Assembly and the work being done through the major departments of the World Council.

In addition, it is safe to say that most of Chicago's pastors will be in their own pulpits during that August. These include men whose sermons have appeared in these pages and who rank among America's best preachers.

Finally, the editors of The Pulpit will be glad to see you, too. All in all, it looks as if you can hardly afford *not* to include Evanston and Chicago in your 1954 vacation plans! A.M.M.

The Pulpit

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Founded 1929

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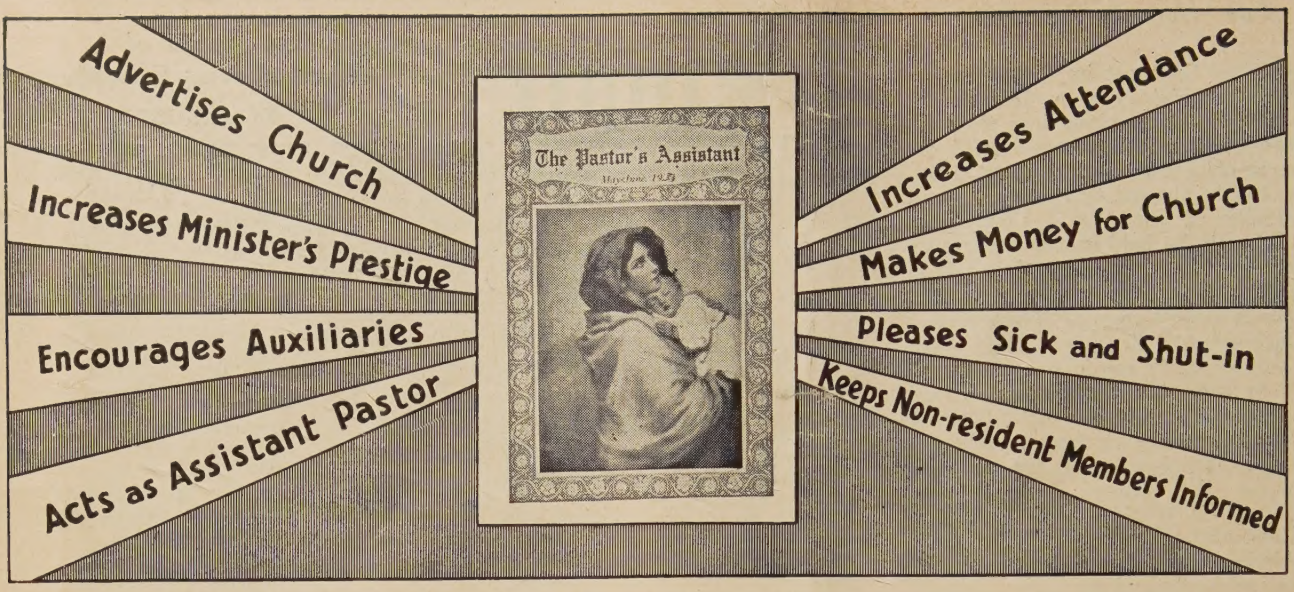

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